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Living
With
Hashgachah
Pratis

Feeling the Divine Touch
at Every Moment

RABBI HESHY KLEINMAN
author of the best-selling *Praying with Fire*

ARTSCROLL® SERIES

EXCERPTED FROM LIVING WITH HASHGACHAH PRATIS

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INTRODUCTION

*I*magine having a powerful formula that enables you to *feel* connected with Hashem —*always*—at every moment, offering a sense of security and peace. Deep within us all lies a spiritual essence, a lofty —“*chelek Eloka mima’al* —a Divine soul yearning for nourishment to embrace life’s sacred moments. Further, what if this secret formula could also help you interpret your life’s events, discovering their purpose and fulfilling your true mission?

The **V’Ani Tefillah Foundation** introduces this profound possibility through this *free* booklet now available in shuls and schools globally. This booklet offers a 10-day glimpse into the transformative teachings of the ArtScroll publication, ‘**Living with Hashgachah Pratis: Feeling the Divine Touch at Every Moment**’. Join us on this journey to unlock the Divine in the everyday, enriching your spiritual connection and understanding of life’s intricate tapestry.

The ‘**Living with Hashgachah Pratis: Feeling the Divine Touch at Every Moment**’ book offers a unique journey with eighty-nine 5-minute daily lessons, each a step on an ascending path drawing you nearer to Hashem. These moments of inspiration and its *125+ true stories*, are designed to help you:

- ❧ **Chapter 1:** Aspire Higher
- ❧ **Chapter 2:** Internalize Hashgachah Pratis
- ❧ **Chapter 3:** Connect to Hashem’s Presence For Life
- ❧ **Chapter 4:** Experience Hashgachah Pratis In Our Personal World
- ❧ **Chapter 5:** Deal with Heartbreak, Disappointment, and Misfortune
- ❧ **Chapter 6:** See Hashgachah Pratis On The World Stage
- ❧ **Chapter 7:** Fulfill Your Tefkid — Achieving Your Individual Greatness
- ❧ **Chapter 8:** Understand the Role Of Struggle and Pain In Fulfilling Your Tefkid
- ❧ **Chapter 9:** Recognize Hashgachah Pratis — Our Opportunity to Bring Geulah

Each of the 9 Chapters in the book builds upon the previous chapter, guiding readers through a spiritual ascent towards a life lived in constant awareness of Hashem's guiding hand—Hashgachah Pratis, offering the tools to navigate life's trials and triumphs with emunah and purpose regardless of the obstacles or uncertainties that lie ahead.

We are confident that as you begin to tap the passion and closeness to Hashem that is in every Jewish heart, you will see why one reader said, *'Praying With Fire changed the way I daven, Living with Hashgachah Pratis will change my life.'*

We invite you, BE"H, to join us as partners in this meaningful 89-day journey. It requires just *5-minutes a day*. Ultimately, by deepening our awareness of Hashem's constant Divine Providence, may we merit to bring blessings upon the Jewish people and hasten the arrival of redemption in our times.

Day 1

Day 9 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

It's All in Hashem's Hands

Great *tzaddikim* place their reliance on Hashem, even during the most difficult and desperate times. No wonder they merit Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis.

Hashgachah Pratis: *After he settled in Eretz Yisrael, the Brisker Rav had a kollel of young men who learned Torah diligently. A wealthy man arrived from America and wanted to fully support the kollel. The Brisker Rav refused, saying, "Why would it occur to you that I would agree to trade bitachon in Hakadosh Baruch Hu for bitachon in you?"*¹

Rav Eliyahu Lopian² explains:

Each and every day, Hashem "behaves" with an individual according to the measure of trust that he has in Hashem. As the verse in *Tehillim*³ states, *Hashem is your shadow. He is by your right hand.*⁴ Hashem is like a shadow. When you show [Hashem] a finger, He shows one back to you. If [you show] two fingers [Hashem] shows back two fingers. As Rav Nachman of Breslov teaches, "The fruit of *bitachon* is Hashgachah [Pratis]."⁵

Hashgachah Pratis: *The Alter of Novardok was living in seclusion in a forest cabin. The candle by which he had been learning went out, leaving him in complete darkness. Suddenly, a man brought him another candle, without the Alter noticing him coming or going.*

*For twenty-two years, the Alter carried the stub of that candle around with him until it was consumed in a fire. The Alter took that as a Heavenly sign that even a reminder about *bitachon* was no longer necessary for him.*⁶

1. *V'Higadeta, Bereishis*, by Rav Yaakov Galinsky, Israel Bookshop, page 59.

2. *Lev Eliyahu*, Volume 3, *Parashas Emor*, page 65, s.v. *V'achein*; also see *Ohr Yisrael, Michtav 24*, cited in *Ohr Yechezkel, Emunah*, page 123.

3. 121:5.

4. See *Radak* *ibid.*: *To help you in all your endeavors.*

5. Cited in *Sefer HaMeir LaAretz, Bereishis*, Volume 1, page 419.

6. Adapted from *The Alter of Novardok*, by Rabbi Shlomo Weintraub, ArtScroll, pages

Notwithstanding the pure *bitachon* of *tzaddikim*, this same dynamic is available to *everyone*. Conversely, those who place their trust elsewhere are at the mercy of the people or events in which they have placed their trust.

As the Rambam⁷ teaches, *anyone* who places his complete faith in Hashem can merit Hashgachah Pratis — even when there appears to be no solution in sight, as the following story attests:

Hashgachah Pratis: *Besides being a prolific author, Rabbi Nachman Seltzer, at the time this incident takes place, also ran a kollel. Unfortunately, the group of people upon whom he relied to make the \$8,000 payroll for that particular month was unable to do so. Rabbi Seltzer racked his brains for a solution, but none was forthcoming.*

As he had payroll to make the next day and no solution in sight, Rabbi Seltzer went to shul to daven Maariv and placed his issue before Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

“You know how hard I work to pay the yungerleit,” he said. “I have nowhere to turn and nobody to ask. I have to pay them by tomorrow. How am I going to do that?” he implored Hashem. “Ribbono Shel Olam, I have no strength to do anything more. I am asking You to do the rest.”

When he opened his door the next morning to go to Shacharis, he bumped into a friend he had not seen in some time. After exchanging greetings, he related the dilemma of the \$8,000 shortfall. His friend reached into his pocket and gave him an \$8,000 check.⁸

Rabbi Seltzer saw firsthand what Rav Eliyahu Lopian knew to be true: “Each and every day, Hashem ‘behaves’ with an individual according to the measure of trust that he has in Hashem.”

Take It With You

- ▶ Even in desperate times, *tzaddikim* trust Hashem, warranting Divine Hashgachah Pratis.
- ▶ Our level of trust in Hashem determines His daily interactions with us.
- ▶ Absolute faith in Hashem can lead to miraculous solutions in dire situations.

51-52.

7. Moreh Nevuchim, Section 3, Perek 17,18; Ramban, Iyov 36:7, s.v. Ki ha'adam mipnei; Sforno, Parashas Tazria 13:47, cited in Sefer Sifsei Chaim, Pirkei Emunah V'Hashgachah, Volume 1, page 46, s.v. Ha'yesod.

8. Paraphrased from Zera Shimshon, Rabbi Nachman Seltzer, ArtScroll, pages 125-132.

Day 2

Day 11 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Make It Your Spiritual Clarity

The story (Day 9) about Rabbi Nachman Seltzer's trust in Hashem — and Hashem's response — arouses in most of us the sentiment, "I want that too! I want to be able to go home, go to sleep with a problem, and wake up with it solved by Hashem."

Nevertheless, even when we have realized that we want to take the leap, we need a starting point in our action plan. In yesterday's lesson (Day 10), we stated that the first step is to recognize the significance of the *desire* to connect to Hashem. But how do we then go from *desire* to *implementation*? How can we actually begin to draw close to Hashem and to become aware of His loving Presence?

The good news is that Hashem provides a path for us to follow, with circumstances and situations designed to capture our attention and encourage us to acknowledge His loving Presence.⁹ These occurrences are opportunities to seek and become aware of His influence in our lives, allowing us to *feel* His calming Presence. The journey to success is laid out before us, readily available for those who choose to perceive it and embrace it.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Yocheved¹⁰ received the bad news — the diagnosis of a dreadful disease at the age of 32. She and her husband immediately ran to Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky for a berachah. The day after receiving the Rosh Yeshivah's blessing that all will, iy"H, be well, Yocheved was told by another doctor (a second opinion), that the original bad news was a total misdiagnosis.*

When she went back to the Rosh Yeshivah to tell him the wonderful news, she casually related that now her family could go to Eretz Yisrael as planned for a three-week summer vacation. When the Rosh Yeshivah heard that, he said, "You need to try it for a year, it's a great merit for you and your family to live in Eretz Yisrael." Incredulously, with four children and a business to run, but

9. See Yoma 38b: One who comes to purify himself is given assistance from Above.

10. Names in this story have been changed.

with the Rosh Yeshivah's blessing, they picked themselves up two weeks later and moved.

But where could they find an apartment large enough for their family and business in a very tight rental market, at a moment's notice? No problem for G-d to arrange. He just put everyone involved "in the precise right place at the precise right time."

At the time, Yocheved's older sister Aliza was living in Eretz Yisrael. Literally three hours after her sister spoke with the Rosh Yeshivah, Aliza heard that her neighbor was moving out of the newly built large apartment next door. She happened to have known the owner of the apartment and called her.

The apartment owner told Aliza the following remarkable story. "I just had my hand on my phone about to call a family that was ready and able to sign a lease for the new large apartment next door to you. When I saw your name on the caller I.D., I decided to pick up your call first. Well, if you vouch for your sister, then consider the apartment hers."

And so, the amazing story unfolded, from its extraordinary beginning to its happy conclusion. Yocheved secured a large apartment right next to her sister Aliza, which allowed her to travel to Eretz Yisrael with peace of mind, following the advice and blessings of the Rosh Yeshivah.

Where someone else might have seen nothing more than "coincidence" and "boy, did we get lucky," Yocheved and her husband saw Hashem's guiding hand. From the remarkable story's beginning to end, it was a Hashgachah Pratis experience designed by Hashem. Yet, what set Yocheved and her husband apart was their belief and awareness of Hashem's constant Presence. They had the *desire* and the faith to look for It, and because of this, they were able to perceive what others might have missed.

Awareness of Hashem's constant Presence and the *desire* to seek it can lead to astonishing realizations when we attentively observe the occurrences in our own lives. Yet, such Divine orchestration shouldn't surprise us.

Hashgachah Pratis: Rabbi Yonason Rosenblum, the man behind "The Mishmar Shailah," a weekly shailah challenge, wanted to develop an app for his program. Although daunted by the quoted \$15,000 price tag, he did not give up, trusting that somehow Hashem would provide a way.

Several days later, a yeshivah student overheard Rabbi

Rosenblum discussing his dream. The student mentioned that his father, a web developer, might help. Soon after, a donor, who had committed to a \$1,000 donation a year earlier, approached Rabbi Rosenblum, ready to provide \$6,000. Remarkably, the following day, the web developer sent an email quoting the exact same amount for the project — \$6,000.¹¹

The next stage in our vital spiritual ascent is how we can successfully *internalize Living With Hashgachah Pratis* daily, with clarity and connection. Let's read on!

Take It With You

- ▶ Our experiences are Hashem's call for our attention, a means for us to be aware of His Presence.
 - ▶ Through awareness of Hashem's hand in seemingly mundane situations, we can draw closer to Him.
 - ▶ Recognizing Hashem's constant guidance is the first step in our spiritual progression toward living calmly in His care.
-

11. *Mishpacha*, Issue 901, March 2, 2022, page 130.

Day 3

Day 14 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Out of the Ordinary

*I*n yesterday's lesson (Day 13), we concluded that intellectual understanding alone falls short of fostering a faith that is clear, steadfast, and deeply embedded. Instead, a deeper level of emunah is crucial. So, how do we achieve such a level? David HaMelech advises,¹² *Remember the wonders He has done...* Yet, in the absence of witnessing overt wonders and miracles, how can we "remember" all that Hashem does in our lives?

*Michtav MeEliyahu*¹³ offers a thoughtful solution by expanding the concept of "miracles," as follows:

*The definition of "miraculous is when Hashem shows His providence in a way that any thinking person recognizes that the events are not natural; rather, they are a revelation of the Divine hand."*¹⁴

Miracles, both grand and subtle, draw our gaze toward Hashem's interventions, solidifying our belief that behind these phenomena lies not mere chance or natural order, but the Will of Hashem. Through such displays, His active Presence becomes seared into our hearts and minds. They underscore the fact that it is Hashem, not nature or coincidence, Who is behind these extraordinary events.¹⁵

While open miracles may seldom occur in our daily lives,¹⁶ we often experience unusual, unexpected, "out-of-the-ordinary," unforeseen events and happenings that deviate somewhat from the norm — instances that often elicit an almost instinctive sense of, "Oh, wow, what are the chances — Hashem must have done that," when we witness them.

These moments — whether joyous revelations like totally

12. *Tehillim* 105:5

13. Volume 1, page 203. See *Yaaros Devash, Derush* 11; *Ahavas Yonason, Haftarah, Parashas Eikev, s.v. Vatomer Tzion; Lehoros Nassan, Moadim*, Volume 2, page 148.

14. Cited in *Mishpacha*, "The Terrible Miracle of October 7," by Gedalia Guttentag, Issue 99, January 17, 2024, page 40.

15. *Shaarei Orach*, Volume 2, page 31.

16. See *Ramban, Shemos* 13:16, s.v. *Im kein*.

unexpected monetary gain or painful setbacks (i.e., a child's broken engagement) — give us a clearer view of Hashem's orchestration, distinguishing them from life's regular cadence and prompting us to realize that these are not mere coincidences or nature, but a reflection of Hashem's intervention.¹⁷

Unusual experiences provide a golden opportunity to strengthen our emunah. They hold the power to awaken us and can serve as catalysts to deepen our awareness of Hashem's constant Presence in all the events of our lives. They offer a chance to stay stable, rooted, and guided, especially during daunting challenges or setbacks. Experiencing these unusual situations, whether in critical moments or in everyday life, enables us to cultivate a firm and unwavering belief in Hashem's constant Presence in our lives.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Reb Tzvi (Hershel) Ettinger, a devout follower of the Belzer Rebbe, Reb Aharon Rokeach, was drafted into the Russian army before World War II. In the heat of a battle, his unit was ordered to fire at German planes from a concealed position among some ruins. Amid the debris, Reb Tzvi stumbled upon remnants of a Jewish calendar. Amazed by the unusual "find," and then realizing from the calendar that it was Shabbos, he was spiritually jolted and refrained from firing. Soon afterward, the aerial assault from the German planes shifted away from his location, sparing his life.*

The unlikely discovery of such a calendar scrap amid ruins not only saved Reb Tzvi's life but also led him to internalize Hashem's constant Presence.

After surviving the war, he lived a fulfilling life, way into his nineties, completed the Daf Yomi cycle an amazing seven times, and merited three children and sixteen grandchildren, all following in his G-d-fearing footsteps.¹⁸

Hashgachah Pratis: *On a chilly winter Friday evening, the Shabbos meal had just concluded. Nineteen-year-old Shlomo¹⁹ lounged on his living room sofa, positioned adjacent to his dining room's mirrored closet doors. With the longer hours of a winter Shabbos night stretching ahead, Shlomo vacillated over beginning his weekly Torah study ritual — reading the portion twice in Hebrew ("shnayim mikra") and once in Aramaic ("echad targum"). Despite*

17. *Sefer Sifsei Chaim, Pirkei Emunah V'Hashgachah*, Volume 1, page 96, s.v. Muvan.

18. "Calendar Calculations in the Camps," as heard from his son.

19. Name changed.

the ample time at his disposal, he resolved not to postpone this vital mitzvah.²⁰

Rising to retrieve his Chumash from the far end of the couch, Shlomo began his study. Ten minutes in, and a decade after the installation of the mirrored closet doors, a startling incident occurred. The glass mirrors, without warning, plummeted from the closet doors, crashing onto the very spot where Shlomo's head had been resting moments earlier.

The loud crash of the shattering glass brought Shlomo's family hurrying to the scene. Miraculously, Shlomo was unharmed, positioned at the other end of the couch with his Chumash. It was only later that he pieced together the sequence of events, realizing the personal Hashgachah Pratis that shielded him from potential devastation.

This realization also brought to mind a teaching from the Gemara:²¹ those who diligently complete the shnayim mikra reading are blessed with prolonged days and years.²²

Unusual episodes serve as beacons, illuminating Hashem's Omnipresence. They bolster our belief system, especially when we grapple with inexplicable adversities. Experiencing Hashem's hand in these events ensures that our spiritual compass remains unwavering, no matter the challenges thrown our way.

20. *Orach Chaim, Siman 285. See Ba'al HaTurim, Shemos 1:1.*

21. *Berachos 8a-b. See Ben Yehoyada ibid.; Baal HaTurim, Shemos 1:1.*

22. *Heard from Shlomo fifteen years after the event.*

Day 4

Day 24 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

One Step at a Time

Every step we take is under the watchful guidance of Hashem, as we acknowledge each morning with the blessing, "Ha'meichin mitz'adei gahver." This truth is even more obvious during challenging times when we might feel lost or overwhelmed.

By maintaining our faith and trust in Hashem, during times of seeming adversity, we gain the capacity to spiritually elevate ourselves. Each hurdle we face and every challenge we encounter, whether we overcome it or not, has not only the potential to bring us closer to Hashem but also shapes our character.

It also fosters resilience and patience, leading us to profound spiritual growth. With this mindset, every experience, whether joyful or challenging, becomes a step toward greater spiritual enlightenment and fulfillment.

Hashgachah Pratis: *After six weeks in the hospital with a severe case of Coronavirus, Rabbi Chaim Aryeh Zev Ginzberg miraculously came home. Yet, he faced significant muscle weakness and nerve damage. His right leg lost all movement while he was lying immobile in bed, which led to severe nerve damage.*

A thought-provoking statement from the Chafetz Chaim offered Rabbi Ginzberg insight and inspiration: We thank Hashem each morning for every step we can take. When Hashem sees someone rapidly using up his "allotted steps," He decides to require bed rest or even an illness, preserving the person's steps and potentially extending his life. In reality, what appears as adversity may be a hidden blessing. What seems like a punishment is really Hashem's remedy for longer life.²³

When we deeply contemplate the orchestration of seemingly "random" encounters, sometimes we are privileged to come to an

23. *Mishpacha*, "Between Two Worlds," by Rabbi Chaim Aryeh Zev Ginzberg, Issue 818, July 8, 2020, page 64.

awe-inspiring realization. The precision and intricacy with which our paths are determined, down to each individual step, is nothing short of a masterpiece. The flawless synchronization of events, the interweaving of lives and experiences, is a testament to Hashem's design of staggering beauty and complexity.

This awareness ignites awe and wonder, as we have a "front-row seat" to witness the extraordinary precision with which our journeys are meticulously crafted. It's an exhilarating testament to the profound Divine direction of our lives with "out-of-this-world" precision by Hashem's unseen hand. The following innocuous "chance" meeting, which ultimately affected thousands, illustrates this point:

***Hashgachah Pratis:** At the age of eighteen, Rav Yosef Yozel Horowitz (the future Alter of Novardok) was set to marry. After his future father-in-law's untimely death, he became financially responsible for his fiancée, his mother-in-law, and her eight children.*

Once, when Rav Yosef Yozel was twenty-seven years old, he had to take a business trip to Memel, where Rav Yisrael Salanter, founder of the Mussar Movement lived. Rav Yisrael "happened to be" at the train station in Memel. His eyes "happened to be" drawn to one passenger who stood out from the rest, hurrying on his way with packages in his arms.

Rav Yisrael asked him, "Where are you running, young man?" The young Rav Yosef Yozel said, "To make a parnassah." "For what do you need a parnassah?" asked Rav Yisrael. "I have a wife, mother-in-law, and her eight children at home to support. One needs to have with what to live," said Rav Yosef Yozel. Rav Yisrael responded, "And I thought one must have with what to die."

Those stark words caused Rav Yosef Yozel to close his business, and join Rav Yisrael Salanter's Kovno Kollel, where he studied Torah eighteen hours a day and ultimately became the great Alter of Novardok, a leader of thousands.²⁴

This narrative reminds us to cherish every step, understanding that even in seemingly random events, Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis is evident. With this realization, we can view the world and our role in it with gratitude, consistently acknowledging Hashem's unwavering Presence.

24. *Greatness*, by Eytan Kobre, Mosaica Press, pages 4-5.

Take It With You

- ▶ Challenges are not obstacles, but opportunities for spiritual growth under Hashem's guidance.
 - ▶ A faithful mindset turns all experiences into steps toward spiritual enlightenment and fulfillment.
 - ▶ Even apparent randomness holds a Divine purpose, enabling us to appreciate each step and interaction.
-

Day 5

Day 26 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Always in the Right Place

Life's unpredictable twists and turns often leave us baffled or disheartened. However, the following story teaches us that seemingly adverse events or delays are Divinely orchestrated and may be for a higher purpose.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Moshe Sofer (the future Chasam Sofer) was eager to get married. After hearing of Sarah Yurowitz's refinement and good character and ascertaining that he would be able to continue learning Torah after marriage, he agreed to the shidduch. But when his mother learned that Sarah was older and previously married, and his mentors, Rav Nosson Adler and the Haflaah, expressed concerns for different reasons, Moshe's conviction wavered. Seeking guidance, he wrote to Rav Adler.*

The awaited advice never arrived on time. Taking the silence as affirmation, Moshe married Sarah. Only after their wedding did the advice come through, suggesting he end the engagement. By then, it was too late. Moshe saw the delay as Hashgachah Pratis. He embraced his married life and continued his Torah studies. He ultimately became one of the greatest in his generation, offering guidance and direction to thousands.²⁵

Similarly, business blunders can also be part of a bigger Divine blueprint. Instead of mere financial setbacks, they could be transformative moments steering us toward spiritual insight and maturity.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Someone consulted Rav Mordechai Schwab to discuss the implications of a very costly business mistake he had made. Rav Schwab told him that Rav Dessler once disclosed to him a mistake he made regarding a very important matter, and commented, "Mistakes are also min haShamayim (from Heaven)."²⁶*

When we experience such incidences, we ultimately acknowledge

25. *The Chasam Sofer*, by Yisroel Besser, ArtScroll, pages 56-57.

26. *Be'er HaParashah, Toldos*, "The Avodah of Our Generation," cited in *Living Emunah*, Nov. 21, 2022/27 Cheshvan 5783.

“I wish it hadn’t happened,” but “it was Hashem’s will that I should lose out.” And although such an occurrence seems to be unfortunate at the time, it’s crucial to understand that even if something seems regrettable, we believe that because it is Heaven sent, ultimately, it is destined for a greater good.

Hashgachah Pratis: *When Chaim got engaged, his family was overjoyed. However, shortly before the wedding, Chaim was diagnosed with diabetes. He was given an insulin pump equipped with an alarm that would sound if his sugar level became too low or too high. Chaim moaned, “What kind of life is that?”*

One year after he married, he and his wife merited to have a beautiful baby boy. Chaim rushed to the shul for the shalom zachar and decided to take a shortcut through a relatively dangerous side road where there were previous reports of trouble.

As he walked along the road, he was pushed to the ground by an unsavory character. Upon impact, the insulin pump’s alarm sounded. The marauders ran, thinking that Chaim had sounded an alarm to the police.

As Chaim quickly got up and headed to shul, he suddenly realized that his insulin pump, something he thought would wreck his life, actually saved it. He had thought it was in the wrong place — on him — at the wrong time — just as he began his married life. But it was in the perfect place at the perfect time after all.²⁷

These real-life accounts encourage us to have faith in life’s grand design. Rather than yielding to despair or regret during adversities, understanding that even our perceived setbacks are part of a larger Heavenly plan is beneficial. Such faith instills us with courage, determination, and optimism, filling our life’s voyage with purpose and joy.

Take It With You

- ▶ Unforeseen disappointments can be part of a Divine plan for our greater good and spiritual growth.
- ▶ Errors and mistakes may be seeds for spiritual transformation.
- ▶ Trusting in Divine guidance transforms uncertainties into opportunities for spiritual enrichment.

²⁷. *Inspired*, by Rabbi Binyamin Pruzansky, ArtScroll.

Day 6

Day 45 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

It's Exactly What Hashem Planned

Hashgachah Pratis: *A past student of Rav Mordechai Schwab urgently needed to consult his Rebbi but was unable to reach him. On his way to shul the next morning, he was pleasantly surprised to meet Rav Schwab.*

He said, "I have a crucial question to ask Rebbi. It's such Hashgachah Pratis that we met." Rav Schwab replied, "Even if we hadn't met, that also would have been Hashgachah Pratis."

When life doesn't unfold as hoped for or expected, understanding that this is also part of Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis can be comforting. Recognizing this helps us navigate uncertainties and challenges, transforming our perspectives and responses to the twists and turns of life. It's a reminder that every moment is part of a broader, purposeful path.

Hashgachah Pratis: *One Erev Shabbos, the weekly pay of sixteen-year-old Yechezkel Levenstein (the future Mirrer Mashgiach), was stolen from his coat pocket. This incident convinced him that material possessions do not last. He left home for a small yeshivah in Makova, Poland, and at the age of eighteen, he went to learn in the famous Lomza Yeshivah. He went on to become the famous Mashgiach who would help shape the future of Klal Yisrael.²⁸*

Rav Levenstein's experience of having his earnings stolen was a turning point in his life. It's not that he saw the event as a "miracle," but he recognized it as a sign of Hashem's involvement. It's not that Hashem made the theft occur for Rabbi Levenstein to become a great teacher, but rather that Hashem caused the event to happen, and Rabbi Levenstein chose to see it as an opportunity for spiritual growth and redirection.

28. *Reb Chatzkel*, Rabbi Yitzchak Kasnett, ArtScroll, page 12.

No resentment or questions clouded Rav Levenstein's recognition that Hashem was acting toward him with love. With this clear vision, He saw his way to the path that led him to spiritual greatness. Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis set the stage, and Rav Levenstein chose to act upon it in a way that ultimately led him to his position as the Mirrer Mashgiach, who would greatly influence future generations of Torah scholars.

The hidden truth is that Hashem is always coordinating all the events in our lives to enable us to achieve something even greater than what we may have originally set out to do.

Hashgachah Pratis: *The custom of Reb Ber'tze, a chassid of Rebbe Asher of Stolin, was to set the table for the Seder himself. But one year, after setting the table as was his custom, a while later he saw that the matzos and the wine were scattered all over the floor. His wife explained, "When I passed by the table, my apron got caught on the tablecloth, and since you placed everything so close to the edge, it's all your fault!"*

Reb Ber'tze kept his calm and replied, "This was Hashem's plan. It's no one's fault. This is what Hashem wanted." Reb Ber'tze appeased his wife, and they continued with whatever remained from the Seder with joy.

The following day, Rebbe Ber'tze davened Shacharis in the beis midrash of Rebbe Asher of Stolin. R' Asher said, "The Seder of Reb Ber'tze was greater than all the others. No one reached the heights he attained." Despite his upset Seder table, he finished the Seder happy, knowing that everything was from Hashem even though it wasn't what he originally hoped for.²⁹

When faced with challenges, adversities, or disruptions in our lives, we can choose to see them as opportunities for spiritual growth, guided by Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis. It is not merely about accepting life's ups and downs with equanimity. It's about recognizing that each event, each circumstance, and each challenge is an opportunity for us to grow, learn, and see it as part of Hashem's plan. It's about transforming our understanding of our lives, shifting from seeing ourselves as victims of unfortunate circumstances to active participants in God's Divine design.

In adopting this perspective, we find strength in our trials and joy when we persevere. We learn to see the blessings in our challenges and the greater lessons and blessings in our successes. We

29. *Torah Wellsprings*, Rav Elimelech Biderman, Pesach, 5822, page 51.

understand that our paths are not random or haphazard but guided by Hashem's loving hand, leading us toward our ultimate purpose and potential. This is the transformative power of recognizing and embracing Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis in our lives.

Take It With You

- ▶ Embracing Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis can transform our perspective toward accepting life's challenges.
 - ▶ Even events that appear difficult can steer our path in a more meaningful direction.
 - ▶ Accepting adversities as part of Hashem's plan enables us to find strength in trials and to persevere.
-

Day 7

Day 56 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Hashgachah Pratis and Fulfilling Your Tafkid

Hashgachah Pratis: *On a warm summer day at Camp Munk, young Dovid Trenk was sitting on a bench when his friend, Shmuel Bloom, from Ner Israel Yeshiva in Baltimore, approached him. Shmuel said, "Dovid, consider joining Ner Israel as a student and dorm counselor; you're the perfect fit." Although content at the Mirrer Yeshivah, the chance to study under Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman was too appealing for Dovid to resist, so he accepted the offer.*

In Ner Israel, Dovid discovered a different sort of kavod HaTorah, an awe that had its roots in Slabodka, where Rav Ruderman had learned. Further, working as a dormitory counselor allowed Dovid a chance to interact with younger students, developing his future awe-inspiring chinuch skills. That position also opened other doors as well. Although Dovid spent only ten months in Ner Israel, he considered himself a student of the yeshivah, reflecting on the invaluable lessons he had learned.

Whenever he saw his "old friend" Reb Shmuel Bloom later in life, Reb Dovid would embrace him and call out, "This man sent me to Ner Israel. He gets the credit for changing my life."³⁰

Certainly, it was Hashem Who "gets the credit." He played the pivotal role in sending both Dovid Trenk and Shmuel Bloom to Camp Munk, even before they acquired the titles of Rabbi Trenk and Rabbi Bloom, and before embarking on their respective journeys toward fulfilling their valuable life's mission.

Hashem orchestrated that Reb Shmuel meet Reb Dovid sitting on a bench. He planted the idea in Reb Shmuel's mind that Reb Dovid should go to Ner Israel. He orchestrated all the other "circumstances"

30. Excerpted from *Just Love Them*, by Rabbi Yisroel Besser, ArtScroll.

designed for Reb Dovid's holy mission to succeed as the consummate *mechanech*.

With this perspective, we can recognize that all the moments of our life are the means and tools Hashem gives us to succeed in fulfilling our unique and holy mission. Every tiny brushstroke is an essential part of the unique picture that is your incomparable life, arranged by the Master Director above. Every experience, every triumph, and even every challenge and sorrow is specifically tailored by Hashem for your ultimate spiritual success.

Hashgachah Pratis places us in the right situation (Camp Munk) at the right time. It determines the people (Reb Shmuel Bloom) we meet, the opportunities (position as dorm counselor) we encounter, and the situations we face. These are not coincidental or random events, but precisely Heavenly-designed circumstances that provide us with the means to learn and to grow, and to mold us into the individuals we are meant to be, enabling us to fulfill our *tafkid*. These moments provide the ideal platform for us to harness our unique skills and talents, allowing us the opportunity to have a positive and meaningful spiritual impact on the world.

Hashgachah Pratis assures us of Hashem's continuous involvement in our lives. This awareness gives us the courage to take steps toward meeting our *tafkid*. In every step of our journey, we find comfort in the knowledge that we are never alone, always accompanied by Hashem's guiding and supportive Presence.

Hashgachah Pratis reassures us that even when things don't go as we planned, there's a Divine Plan at work that is guiding us toward our ultimate purpose. It enables us to maintain emunah and optimism even during challenging times.

Most importantly, Hashgachah Pratis offers us a profound understanding that regardless of our *tafkid*, we are here on earth for a special Divinely arranged purpose. Recognizing the Divine orchestration in our lives helps us realize that we have a uniquely significant contribution to make to this world.

In essence, the recognition of Hashgachah Pratis in our lives deepens our relationship with Hashem, enhances our understanding of our personal life journey, and helps us find and fulfill our *tafkid*. The understanding that our lives are Divinely guided gives us the clarity, courage, and conviction to confidently pursue our purpose. Hashgachah Pratis serves as our guiding light, illuminating our path toward our life's success.

Take It With You

- ▶ Key moments in life (e.g., Dovid Trenk's move to Ner Israel) highlight Hashem's guidance toward our Divine purpose.
 - ▶ Every experience is shaped by Hashgachah Pratis, indicating Hashem's design for our spiritual mission.
 - ▶ Embracing Hashgachah Pratis provides us with clarity and confidence in fulfilling our unique roles.
-

Day 8

Day 60 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Big and Small — They Are All Important

In life, every individual has a unique mission — a *tafkid* — which, regardless of its magnitude, holds immense significance to Hashem.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Rav Shlomo Elyashiv, known as the Baal HaLeshem, who lived in the early 1900s, once gave his daughter a cryptic blessing, “You will have one son, and he will be a light to the world.”³¹ That son was Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, generally regarded as the posek ha’dor, the contemporary leading authority on halachah in his generation.³²*

With the fulfillment of his *tafkid*, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv lit up the world in Torah. Others, like Rabbi Moshe Sherer,³³ had the merit to light up and change the world in other ways.

Hashgachah Pratis: *When Basya Bluma Sherer was expecting Rav Moshe Sherer, the legendary chairman of Agudath Israel of America, the Stoliner Rebbe blessed her that she would have a child who would light up the world.³⁴*

What is truly inspirational about fulfilling one’s *tafkid* is that it doesn’t necessitate relentless activity or extraordinary exploits. At certain times in one’s life, one’s purpose may be found not in the cacophony of action, but in the tranquil hush of inaction. Even in those moments of serene quietude, when it seems we are mere observers rather than doers, we might be fulfilling a significant part

31. *Mishpacha*, “A Light to the World,” by Aryeh Ehrlich, Issue 921, July 27, 2022, page 74.

32. See *Nazir* 29b.

33. Chairman of Agudath Israel of America from the 1960s, until his demise in 1998.

34. *Mishpacha*, “Man of Principle in the Halls of Power,” Coordinated by Shmuel Botnick, Issue 960, May 10, 2023, page 102.

of our destined role in the grand scheme of life.

Hashgachah Pratis: *Consider the story of a Conservative Jew inspired by a simple act of prayer at the Kosel. He was moved to donate to an Orthodox shul in Dallas, which catalyzed his own journey to observance and indirectly influenced the growth of Torah institutions in the Dallas community. This ripple effect, set in motion by a devout man's quiet prayer, exemplifies the profound impact even modest actions can have.*³⁵

In the grand Divine orchestration, each person's mission is essential and distinctive.³⁶ Therefore, from an individual standpoint, the completion of one's *tafkid* isn't seen as superior to another's in the eyes of Hashem.

Hashem doesn't gauge the value of achieving one's purpose based on human ambition or worldly recognition, but rather on our devoted adherence to fulfilling the *tafkid* that Hashem assigned. As outlined in *Michtav MeEliyahu*³⁷ concerning our spiritual journey: "Our most significant accomplishment stems from... recognizing [and fulfilling] the Divine mission bestowed upon us in our lifetime."

The world might overlook small deeds, deeming them insignificant, but in the Divine perspective, every soul is invaluable, every action matters, and every mission is critical.³⁸

If a speck of dirt lands on your skin, it goes unnoticed. But when it enters your eye, it disrupts everything, despite its miniscule size.

Although it might seem that your contributions are small, every action holds deep resonance, setting off spiritual ripples in the universe, unseen to the human eye. Remember, our paths are not arbitrary but are specifically assigned by Hashem, embracing the reality that they are being guided by Hashem's unseen hand.

Although it's human nature to compare one's role to that of others, questioning why one person's mission appears grand while another's seems humble, the allotment of these roles, these Divine assignments, is a matter of Heavenly wisdom, far beyond our earthly understanding.³⁹

"... It is impossible for its reason to be revealed in this world at all,

35. "The Most Effective Way to Have Influence," by Rabbi Efreim Goldberg, December 8, 2021, <https://www.rabbiefremgoldberg.org/influence>.

36. *Pri Tzaddik*, Volume 2, page 117.

37. *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Volume 3, page 207.

38. See *Nefesh HaChaim*, *Shaar 1*, *Perek 3*.

39. *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Volume 4, pages 100-101.

because the distribution of portions to souls according to their purpose is rooted in a “higher world”... it is not comprehended below [on earth] at all... and it is above [the concept of] time...⁴⁰

Every note, no matter how faint, is critical to the symphony of Hashem’s world. Embrace your purpose, for by living it, you become an active musician in the grand orchestra of the world’s existence.

Take It With You

- ▶ Every unique *tafkid* or purpose, big or small, holds Divine importance.
 - ▶ Modest actions can have profound spiritual impacts.
 - ▶ Every act, driven by our Divine mission, is invaluable in Hashem’s grand design.
-

40. See *Pischei She’arim, Nesiv Seder HaPartzufim*, 8-10 [cited in *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Volume 4, page 101]. However, its reason will be revealed only in the general rectification at the end of the chain of events.

Day 9

Day 64 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Hashem Helps Us Choose Wisely

Hashgachah Pratis: *The Ponevezher Rav told a confidant that he believed Hashem had spared his life so he could resurrect the Torah institutions decimated by the Holocaust. He recalled having a combined total of one thousand students in Europe across his yeshivah, kollel, and Bais Yaakov school. Thus, he felt a deep sense of duty to establish in Eretz Yisrael institutions that would cater to at least that many students, which would include a yeshivah, homes for refugees, orphans, and more.*⁴¹

Every person has a deep-seated longing, a unique destiny that gives shape to their journey. The Ponevezher Rav saw his survival amid the terrors of his time as a clear sign of Hashgachah Pratis, steering him toward his exceptional purpose.

The Gemara⁴² tells us that even before we are born, details of our path in life are already laid out by a Divine voice that proclaims: the relationships we'll forge, the places we'll call home, and the passions that will fill our days. While we might not audibly hear this Divine decree, its resonance is deeply embedded in our souls.

Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, endows every location with a certain "enchantment," imbues a man with the Divine call to feel drawn to, and marry, a specific woman, and lights up our eyes when we find a place to call our own. These intricacies harmonize, creating the melody of life and molding our distinct roles in the grand design of existence.⁴³

Hashgachah Pratis: *As a helpless five-year-old boy, Eli Beer watched a bus explode. At the tender age of seven, he witnessed his first terror attack. Instead of being paralyzed by these traumas, they*

41. *Secrets of the Soul, Conversations With Rav Shlomo Hoffman*, Volume 1, Feldheim, page 49.

42. *Sotah* 2a.

43. *Maharsha, Sotah* 47a.

ignited in him a passion to save lives.

Beer, who failed in school, became Founder and President of United Hatzalah,⁴⁴ the world's largest and fastest fully-volunteer EMS service that has resulted in more than 5.5 million people being saved. US Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, hailed Beer as a visionary social entrepreneur who transformed a simple idea into a lifesaving powerhouse.⁴⁵

Rav Wolbe⁴⁶ enlightens us that our innate instincts are nothing other than clear revelations of Hashem in our world — spiritual assets implanted by the Creator in His creations to accomplish His vision for the world. The Gemara⁴⁷ underscores that our life's trajectory is in harmony with our deepest desires — “On the path a man wishes to go, he is led.” Hence, whenever we undertake any venture, it's pivotal to remember that Hashem grants us inherent skills aligning with that endeavor, setting us on our destined path.⁴⁸

Hashgachah Pratis: *Reflecting on his memoir, “90 Seconds,”⁴⁹ Beer expressed a hope that his journey would inspire others, especially the young, to persevere in the face of skepticism.*

“Children have so many dreams and people are always telling them it can't happen. People said the same to me. I want everyone to understand that childhood dreams can happen and that anything is possible.”

So, how does one discover their life's purpose? The key is in acknowledging the profound truth of Hashgachah Pratis, realizing that our passions, talents, and even the situations in which we find ourselves, are all parts of a Divine plan. Tuning into our strengths and acknowledging our areas of growth can guide us to our unique purpose. Embracing this worldview helps us discern Hashem's hints and nudges in the circumstances of our lives, as well as our strengths, our passions, and even our limitations.⁵⁰

44. TedMed, Eli Beer, Tedmed.com.

45. “United Hatzalah's Eli Beer publishes biography three years after nearly dying from COVID-19,” March 19, 2023, [jerusalempost.com](https://www.jerusalempost.com)

46. *Alei Shur*, Volume 1, page 313; *Daas Shlomo, Maamarei Geulah*, Purim and Pesach, page 24; *Rav Wolbe on Chumash*, Volume 2, by Rabbi Yitzchok Caplan, ArtScroll, page 16.

47. *Makkos* 10b.

48. *Haamek Davar, Shemos* 36:2.

49. *90 Seconds*, by Nachman Seltzer, ArtScroll.

50. See *Chovos HaLevavos, Shaar HaBechinah* 4, cited in *Parashas Lech Lecha* 5, “Covenant of Connection,” posted on October 10, 2021 by *Toras Avigdor*.

Ultimately, Hashgachah Pratis enriches our life experiences, shedding light on our personal journeys and our roles in the universe. Truly understanding this concept paves the way for each of us to uncover and fulfill our unique destinies.

Take It With You

- ▶ Each person has a unique *tafkid*.
 - ▶ Our strengths, passions, and challenges are Divine clues to our destiny.
 - ▶ Recognizing Hashgachah Pratis helps us discover our life's mission.
-

Day 10

Day 76 in 'Living with Hashgachah Pratis'

Preparing Now for the Ultimate

Hashgachah Pratis: *On August 2, 1492, every Jew in Spain's large, long-established, prosperous community had to leave or convert. Those who did not obey would be burned at the stake. That final day fell on Tishah B'Av, signaling to the tens of thousands of Jews going into exile that Hashem was angry with them.*

Somehow, they hoped that hidden behind all the terrible troubles they were suffering, Hashem was setting the stage for the final redemption.⁵¹ But what was the plan? How could it unfold from such a terrible tragedy, and what would it look like?⁵²

It wasn't until two centuries later that Hashem's plan would begin to emerge from the shadows. On the day right after the expulsion, August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus set out on his historic voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, and this ultimately led to the founding of the United States of America, a unique nation of religious tolerance and freedom. There, the Jewish people would be able to rebuild thriving Torah communities. There, they would plant the seeds of what we hope will be the final redemption.

Yet, it wasn't just a coincidence that Columbus's voyage and the Jewish exile from Spain happened one day apart. Clearly, it was Hashgachah Pratis, Hashem planting the seeds for the future well-being of His beloved children, the Jewish people. How do we know?

Hashgachah Pratis: *A little more than 300 years later (about 200 years ago), obviously well before the Holocaust even began to take shape, Rav Chaim Volozhin said:*

"The day will come when the pillars of European Jewry will topple, when the yeshivos will be destroyed and uprooted. However,

51. Adapted from *Triumph of Survival*, pages 38-39.

52. See *Megillah* 13b, that Hashem provides the cure before imposing the illness.

they will be reborn in the exile of America, the tenth and final exile of Torah, the final stop of the Jewish people before the arrival of Mashiach."⁵³

The *Ikvesa d'Meshicha* are comprised of periodic waves of suffering — similar to the birth process that culminates in a beautiful newborn child. But why? A main purpose of *Ikvesa d'Meshicha* is to reveal with clarity what we have been learning throughout this book, which is that Hashem's Presence is absolutely everywhere. Every facet of our lives, including the everyday mundane ordinary aspects, is engineered by Hashem's Hashgachah Pratis and is designed for a spiritual purpose and connection.⁵⁴

As the Ramchal⁵⁵ teaches, the purpose of creation and of the exile of the Jewish people is to bring the world to the unequivocal conviction that *ein od milvado* — there is nothing but Hashem. If the recent monumentally incomprehensible events do not spur us to cling to Hashem for strength and protection, it is frightening to imagine what catastrophe would do so.

Further, *Mesillas Yesharim*⁵⁶ writes:

"It is appropriate that one's entire direction in life be oriented solely toward the Creator, and that he should have no other purpose in any action that he undertakes, other than to come close to Him and to break down all the barriers that interpose between him and his Creator."

As our generation has clearly been shown since 2020 (i.e., the Covid pandemic and the Hamas massacre on Simchas Torah), our illusion of security can come crashing down in an instant. As we internalize the inescapable fact that Hashem is continually involved in all our affairs, we begin to gain spiritual clarity and come closer to Him. With that merit, we can accomplish something that has unfortunately eluded the Jewish people for thousands of years. With our heightened spirituality we can bring the *geulah*.

The time is ripe for our spiritual ascent, as we are, by all accounts, very close to the time of Mashiach.⁵⁷ If we sincerely prepare for that

53. *Daring to Dream*, by Agudath Israel of America, page 128. At the bar mitzvah of the Netziv's great-grandson, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik, the Netziv rose to speak. He cited a tradition from the family patriarch, Rav Chaim of Volozhin, that the final station of the Torah prior to Mashiach's arrival would be in far-off America.

54. See *Sotah* 49b.

55. *Daas Tevunos*, *Siman* 34.

56. Chapter 1, s.v. *Nimzeinu Iemeidim*.

57. *Ohr Yechezkel*, *Yirah U'Mussar*, page 229.

time, we will be ready and able to bask in the light of the great spirituality awaiting us and to fulfill the purpose of the glorious *geulah* — *Bayom hahu yihiyeh Hashem echad u'Shemo echad!*

Take It With You

- ▶ The Jewish expulsion from Spain and Columbus's voyage are examples of how Hashem facilitates His plan.
 - ▶ Current global crises underscore the need to trust solely in Hashem.
 - ▶ We must grow spiritually, preparing for the era of Mashiach.
-

ANNOUNCING: A NEW WORLDWIDE HASHGACHAH PRATIS INITIATIVE

*Write your own Hashgachah Pratis story
in a journal.*

Rav Moshe Feinstein and Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky advocated for keeping a personal journal to document instances of Hashgachah Pratis in daily life. Such a practice was endorsed by Rav Avrohom Chaim Levine for his students in Telshe Yeshivah of Chicago and Rav Yechezkel Levenstein for his young daughters.

Why: Chronicling personal experiences aids in internalizing our enduring connection with Hashem, Who orchestrates all of life's events. That means that everything in the world, even disappointments and frustrations, emanate from Hashem's goodness and is part of His Master plan, leading to a transformative spiritual journey.

Thus, we urge you to write a story of your own Hashgachah Pratis experience that reminds you of the daily lesson you just read in '**Living with Hashgachah Pratis**'. The "Tuning-In" section at the end of each of these days, provides helpful hints in crafting your own personal stories. Writing, reflecting, and re-living your own Divine encounters will strengthen your relationship with Hashem, enlighten your spiritual path and increase your growth.

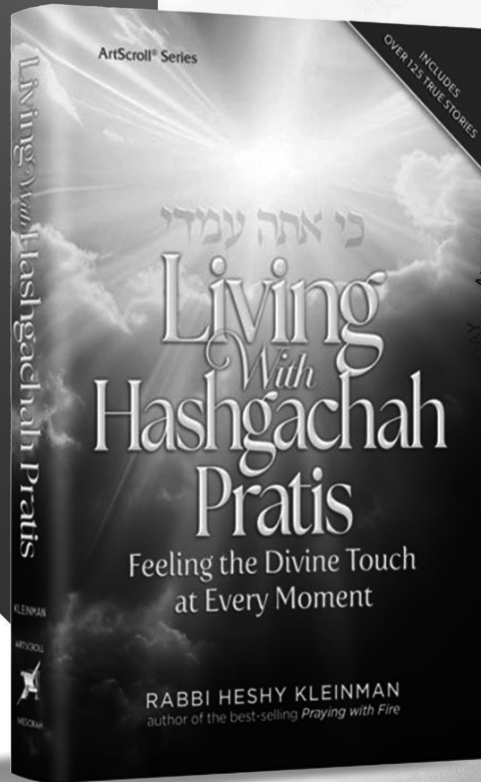
Important Note: Earn a zechus and inspire others when you e-mail your own story to HPratisStories@gmail.com or go to <https://vanitefillah.org/> and click on "Hashgachah Pratis Stories" and then "Submit a Story", for, iy"H, possible inclusion in a subsequent volume on Hashgachah Pratis. (Personal identifying information will be removed upon request.)

FOR PESACH:

Rav Aharon Leib Steinman advised: "The main message at the Seder on Pesach night, where we discuss and elaborate on the miraculous makkos that occurred in Egypt, is "**Hashgachah Pratis.**" "That is to instill into our families the fact that Hashem is involved in every last detail of our lives."

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- How can I discover my life's purpose (tafkid)?

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