

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's Parsha, we read about the remaining plagues which Hashem brought down on the Egyptians. We see how the hand of Hashem punished the Egyptians and at the same time guided the Bnai Yisroel (the Children of Israel). We see from here how Hashem guides our lives. The concept of Hashgacha Pratis – divine intervention, which is one of the foundations of Jewish belief. As the Rambam teaches us in the first of his 13 Principles of Faith: "I believe in perfect faith that the Creator blessed is His Name, is the Creator and the Guider of all creations..."

Believing in Hashgacha Pratis – divine intervention means believing that Hashem guides even the minutest details of the universe. From this belief stems the belief that life is not random. Rather, everything that happens in life is for a purpose.

In January 2006, Mrs. Chaya Levinson of Toronto was told by her doctors that she would need a kidney transplant. Her kidneys were functioning at a mere 17 percent of capacity, and she had to either find a kidney donor or begin regular dialysis.

Together with her husband, R' Yehuda, she began trying to find a donor among her family. Unfortunately those who might have been suitable had incompatible blood types. Though the Levinsons were willing to advertise in the media for a donor, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Lowy, of Agudas Yisrael in Toronto, counseled them against it.

"Rather," he said, "talk to many people about it. Let everyone know you need a donor and word will spread that way." A while afterward, a donor was found and the transplant was scheduled. Less than a week before the date of the surgery, the donor was found to be medically unfit.

Over the next few months this would happen again and again. As upsetting as it was, Mrs. Levinson never lost her faith and kept praying to Hashem for a miracle. A few weeks later, Mrs. Levinson's husband was invited to give a Motza'ei Shabbos shiur (Torah Class) on Likutei Maharar to about 30 people in the home of Chaim and Mindy Halper Oliver.

At first Mrs. Levinson was reluctant to go, she had too much on her mind, but R' Yehuda convinced her to attend. That decision would profoundly change her life, for, after the shiur as people were socializing, Mrs. Levinson mentioned to someone that she was in desperate need of a kidney donor.

"Did you say you need a kidney donor?" a voice came from across the room. Mrs. Levinson looked up and saw that it was Mindy Halper, the hostess, who had asked the question. Mrs. Levinson walked over to Mrs. Halper and said, "Yes, I do need a donor. My kidneys are not functioning. Do you know anyone who would be willing to be a donor?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Halper emphatically. "Me! You can have mine!" It was spontaneous, sincere and without any hesitation. And so began a deep friendship and bonding as the two women pursued the possibility of one being a donor for the other. Monday morning Mindy called Toronto General Hospital to begin testing to determine if she was a suitable donor. She underwent a battery of medical tests and she was cleared. She consulted with her rav, Rabbi Yehoshua Weber of the Clanton Park Shul, and a date was set for the operations.

An article appeared in the Toronto Jewish Tribune about Mrs. Levinson's need for a kidney. A donor came forward, but by that time the Levinsons were working with Mindy. The operation was held in Toronto General Hospital in May 2006 and within weeks both patients were doing remarkably well. Shortly after the surgery, Mindy approached R' Yehuda and said, "I have been having problems getting my Canadian immigration papers. I understand you are an immigration lawyer. Can you help me?" "What is the question?" exclaimed R' Yehuda.

"After what you did for my wife, I would do anything to help you or your family." Mrs. Halper explained that it was very important for her to be recognized as a Canadian citizen and that she would greatly appreciate R' Yehuda getting involved and helping her attain her papers. R' Yehuda assured Mrs. Halper again that he would do anything and everything he could. For the next few months, R' Yehuda worked diligently cutting through red tape and dealing with the authorities. Finally the process was on the verge of success. Only one more requirement remained. By Canadian law, applicants for citizenship must be tested to see that they are not carrying any contagious diseases. Mrs. Halper assured R' Yehuda that she was healthy and that she could get her family physician to attest to that.

"I am sorry," said R' Yehuda, "but that would not be sufficient. We need an exam conducted by a doctor who is approved by "Immigration Canada." I know a very fine woman doctor who is thorough, capable, caring and sensitive. She will take care of it immediately, if I ask her."

When Dr. Iris Shannon saw the results of the lung X-rays she called Mrs. Halper and her husband to her office. Tactfully and compassionately, she told them the frightening news that there was a tiny speck on her lungs that appeared to be malignant. That was followed by a CT scan, MRI and biopsies. Within days she received a second opinion that confirmed Dr. Shannon's findings. She had stage one lung cancer. Mindy and her husband were understandably shocked and frightened by the diagnosis. She was operated on in January 2007 and the tiny tumor was completely removed. Because the cancer had been found in its earliest stages there was no need for subsequent chemotherapy or radiation treatments.

Today, with the Hashem's help both women are enjoying full lives with their families. Thanks to her Ahavas Yisrael (love of another Jew) and Hashgachah Pratis (Divine Providence), Mindy Halper's magnanimous act not only saved the life of a fellow Jew - it also saved her own!" (From In the Spirit of the Maggid p.55) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

In memory of Shusha Malka bas R' Avrohom ob'm

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