

***HASHGACHA PRATIS* IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE**

by Layah Levanah Ornish

One concept of Torah Judaism that I was not raised with, but I found meaningful once I learned about it, is *hashgacha pratis*: seeing the Hand of Hashem in my life.

Accepting with *emuna* that Hashem is involved in every moment of my life, and that I have a personal relationship with Him that can be nurtured and developed, and that it's a two-way street, changed my life.

Sometimes I receive clear messages that He's watching and intervening on my behalf, whether during the most profound and serious aspects of my life, or more mundane ones (although every moment of life is actually profound).

Even in planning the flower arrangements for the *Yamim Ha'noraim* for Ohr HaTorah this year, a *mitzvah* I've been honored to do since 2015, He gave me two signs.

For several years, I've worked with a local florist to provide arrangements twice a year, for *Shavuot* and the *Yamim Ha'noraim*, for both the *bima* and the shul's Learners' Service Room.

The arrangements for the Learners' Service Room are smaller versions of the ones for the *bima*, and in past years I had bought two beautiful, inexpensive white pedestals on which to display them next to the *aron*.

Last year, one of them broke, so I decided I'd just go to the store where I'd bought them and replace it. I was dismayed to learn that post-COVID, they hadn't been able to receive any shipments of them of any size from Mexico in six months, even though they are high-demand products for the store. I had researched and knew that no other store in the area sold anything similar for under \$1,000.

The store did have a couple of smaller pedestals for sale, but they were badly chipped and broken.

I spoke to the store manager about the situation. He went to the back to see if there were any there, to no avail. However, he said, they had just gotten a truck in, and if— **by some miracle**— there were some in that shipment, he would call me.

As I was driving home, I was desperately considering buying the cracked and broken ones and attempting to glue them. Then my phone rang. **It was the manager, who said there were two brand-new pedestals in the shipment, and they were in perfect condition, and he would put them aside for me.**

I made a U-turn and got them...and the manager even gave me 30% off!

Another “wink” from Hashem— as my friend, Sara Yoheved Rigler, calls them— occurred the morning I went to supervise the arrangements being made. I love working with this florist because they not only design the most gorgeous, artistic arrangements, they also let me watch as they're assembled.

The salesperson I've worked with for so many years also is so professional and accommodating and appreciates the *kavod Hashem* for which their products are being used.

When I arrived to oversee the assembling of the four flower arrangements, I was told that she had some sort of an emergency and wasn't there, as she normally would be, so I began working with the arranger, who is a true artist.

A few minutes later, however, she popped in.

It turns out that the "emergency" was a flower emergency: there is a dire shortage of long-stemmed white roses all over the U.S., of which my arrangements contained several each. This florist sources their long-stemmed white roses from Ecuador (on the Equator in South America), where they're grown in rich volcanic soil, but the volcano had recently had snow! Plus there were COVID delivery complications.

So she went above-and-beyond and had gone directly to their local supplier and **was able to buy the few remaining roses they had, just enough for my arrangements, "probably the last long-stemmed white roses in the entire area," she told me.**

She said they were doing four weddings that weekend, and she was going to have to call the four brides and break the news to them that they'd have to make other choices for their flower arrangements.

The rose-filled (and orchids, glads, hydrangeas, lilies, snaps, etc.) arrangements turned out gorgeous and were beautifully displayed on the *bima*, with tall palm leaves and curly-willow branches extending as if to *shamayim*, in birch bark-wrapped vases that the florist provides. And the smaller arrangements on the brand-new pedestals looked great, as well.

There were many appreciative comments from congregants, gratitude from me, and— most of all— a smile of approval from Hashem.

Baruch Hashem! Thank You, Hashem!