

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
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Vayeitzei





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Parshas Vayeitzei

Emunah and Bitachon - Everything is in Hashem's Hands

On Thursday before Shabbos *parashas* וישלח, a chassid of the Toras Chaim of Kosov *zt'l* told his Rebbe that he would be traveling. “And on Shabbos, I will be in Zabilitav.”

The Toras Chaim replied, “Do you really think so?”

The chassid didn't understand the Rebbe's intentions. Why shouldn't he be in Zabilitav?

But there were complications on his trip, and he ended up returning to Kosov.

He asked the Rebbe, “If the Rebbe knew with his *ruach hakadosh* that I wouldn't be in Zabilitav for Shabbos, why didn't you just tell me not to go?”

The Rebbe replied, “It wasn't *ruach hakadosh* and I didn't know you wouldn't get to Zabilitav for Shabbos. However, last week, *parashas* Vayeitzei, we read (28:8), וידר יעקב נדר לאמר אם יהיה, Yaakov made a vow saying, ‘If Hashem will be with me...’ The word לאמר, “saying,” is extra. The *pasuk* could be understood without it.¹ Rather, the *pasuk* should be read as follows, וידר יעקב נדר, Yaakov vowed, לאמר, that he will always say, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי, ‘If Hashem will help me...’ Yaakov made this vow, because he needed a constant reminder

that everything is from Hashem. Yaakov was traveling to the home of Lavan HaRasha, renowned for his conniving ways. Yaakov was worried: How would he pass all the difficult tests Lavan will place before him? He knew that the only solution is to remember that everything is from Hashem, and Lavan can't harm him if it isn't Hashem's decree. He therefore made a *neder* to always say, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי and בעזרת ה' וירצה ה' and the likes (see *Shlah* במוסר י"ב בהעלתך, מוסר י"ב בהעלתך, who encourages this), so he will always remember that everything is in Hashem's hands.”

After saying this *dvar Torah*, the Toras Chaim told his chassid, “I heard you say that you will be Shabbos in Zabilitav, but I didn't hear you say *im yirtzeh Hashem*, therefore I was doubtful it would happen. Because you can't succeed in any venture without Hashem's help” (*Imrei Baruch, Devarim*).

On this topic, we share the following story²:

There was a wealthy, generous man who helped the poor with an open hand, but he didn't believe in *hashgachah pratis*. He thought the wealth he earned was by the “strength of his hand.”

1. Often לאמר means to say to others, but that isn't applicable here.

2. We told this story last week in brief, as it is written by the Chida (חדרי בטן in). This week, we tell the story with elaboration, as brought in *Otzar HaMidrashim*:

Once, he was walking to the marketplace to buy oxen. On the way he met Eliyahu HaNavi, who appeared as a businessman. “Where are you going?”

Eliyahu asked him.

“I am going to the market to buy oxen.”

“Say *im yirtzeh Hashem*, or *אם יגזור ה'*, if Hashem decrees it.”

The merchant said, “I have money in my pocket. Buying the oxen or not buying them is totally up to me.”

Eliyahu told him, “If you have this attitude, you won’t succeed.”

On the way to the marketplace his money fell, and he didn’t realize it. Eliyahu saw the money bag and put it on a stone in the forest, in a place where people don’t pass.

The merchant came to the marketplace, and after a lot of toil found the good oxen he sought. When he was about to pay, he realized that he lost his money.

He went home, devastated.

Sometime later, he took a bag of money and set off for the marketplace once again. Eliyahu met him. This time Eliyahu appeared like an old man. Eliyahu asked him the same question as before, “Where are you going?”

Eliyahu heard the man answer as before. He still didn’t say *im yirtzeh Hashem*. Eliyahu told him, “Say *im yirtzeh Hashem* or *אם יגזור ה'*, because your success is in Hashem’s hands.”

Eliyahu saw that the merchant wasn’t

accepting his counsel, so Eliyahu had him fall asleep. When the merchant was sleeping, Eliyahu took his money bag and put it on the stone in the forest, where the first money bag lay.

When the merchant awoke, he saw that his money was stolen. He returned home, very upset.

He thought about what happened to him twice, and he realized that it was from Heaven. He was being punished because he didn’t say *im yirtzeh Hashem* and believe that everything is run by Hashem’s *hashgachah*. He made a *kabbalah* that from then on he will say *im yirtzeh Hashem* for everything he wants to do.

The merchant set out to the market a third time to buy oxen. This time, Eliyahu appeared like a youth looking for work. “Where are you going?” Eliyahu asked him.

“I am going to the market to buy oxen, *im yirtzeh Hashem*.”

Eliyahu wished him success, and added, “If you need help with the oxen, call me.”

The merchant said, “If Hashem helps me buy the oxen, I will hire you to help me.”

This time, he had *siyata dishmaya*. He bought oxen for a cheap price, and he hired the lad to lead the oxen home. As they were walking, the oxen suddenly ran off into the forest. The merchant ran after them. The oxen stopped near a

stone. The two money bags that the merchant lost were on that stone. The merchant was extremely happy, and he thanked Hashem. He continued on his way with the lad. When he was near his home, the lad suddenly disappeared.

That's when he learned that everything is by Hashem's *hashgachah*.

When one knows that everything is in Hashem's hands, he will know that he can have *bitachon* and Hashem will help him. This brings us to another true story, told by the Alter of Nevardok *zt'l*:

A yeshiva *bachur* had to go home to do the mitzvah of *kibud av ve'em*, but he didn't have any money to pay for the trip. He decided he would do *hishtadlus*, and do whatever he can, and Hashem will help him.

He walked three days to the closest train station. (That doesn't cost money, only energy.) He arrived at the train station several hours before the train would be leaving to his home town. He sat on a bench, took out his Gemara and began to learn as though he was in yeshiva. He had done his *hishtadlus*, now all he had to do was to trust in Hashem and pray that he gets home.

Eventually, people started coming to the train station. A Yid approached him and said, "I'm so happy there will be another Yid on the train. Perhaps we can travel together. We can find a corner, so we don't have to be among all the goyim, and we can learn Torah together."

The *bachur* replied, "I would like that very much, but I don't have a ticket."

"So go buy one. What are you waiting for?"

"The problem is I don't have money to buy a ticket."

"So why are you here? You act very foolishly. You shouldn't have walked for three long days for nothing."

The *bachur* replied, "I trust that my Father in heaven will help me get on the train. Hashem has His ways. I did my *hishtadlus*, and the rest Hashem will do."

The man laughed at him, and said insulting words. Then he bought a ticket and boarded the train.

The *bachur* continued learning Torah. He trusted and prayed that Hashem help him get home, to perform the mitzvah of *kibud av ve'em*.

The conductor blew the first whistle. This meant the train will be leaving in five minutes. People on the platform began boarding the train, but this *bachur* remained sitting on the bench. He was calm, because he trusted Hashem will yet help him get onto the train.

Then the conductor blew the second whistle. Only two minutes left until departure. Suddenly, a Yid came to the station in a hurry, rushing to catch the train. He asked the *bachur*, "Why aren't you boarding the train?"

"I don't have money to buy a ticket."

"I'll buy two tickets. One for you and one for me."

They boarded the train a moment before the doors closed.

The *bachur* thanked his benefactor immensely, and he thanked Hashem for helping him get onto the train.

The *bachur* looked around for a place to sit on the packed train, and that's when he saw the Yid whom he spoke with earlier. The Yid was shocked to see the *bachur* on the train. The *bachur* said, "You see, it is good to trust in Hashem. As the Midrash (*Shochar Tov, Tehillim* 31) states, כל הבוטח בשמי אני מצילו, "Whoever trusts in My name, I will save him."

The man replied, "How can you say you acted wisely? If the man wouldn't have come at the last minute, you would be left alone in the train station, without a way to get home."

This story was told by the Alter of Novardok zt'l, and it is known that he was the *bachur* in this story.

Reb Shalom Shwadron zt'l repeated this story to explain how Lavan foolishly said to Yaakov (31:29), ישל לאל ידי לעשות עמכם רע ואלקני אביכם אמש אמר עלי לאמר השמר לך מדבר עם יעקב מטוב עד רע, "I have the ability to harm you, only the G-d of your father

told me yesterday, 'Be cautious, don't speak good or bad with Yaakov...'" A miracle happened to Yaakov, and Lavan witnessed it. Hashem warned Lavan that he mustn't harm Yaakov. But Lavan still didn't realize that he was totally in Hashem's hands. He still thought he could do anything he wanted to. As he said, יש לאל ידי לעשות עמכם רע, I have the ability to do bad to you... only Hashem prevented me. He didn't recognize that he should emphasize the final words, "Hashem didn't let me" and recognize that he can't do anything if it isn't Hashem's will.

Lehavdil, Lavan's ways reminds us of the foolish Yid who thinks everything is up to man. He saw before his eyes that everything is in Hashem's hands, but he didn't acknowledge it.

Let us go in Yaakov Avinu's ways, לאמר, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי, to always say, "im yirtzeh Hashem" and to know that everything is by Hashem's *hashgachah*. And then we will succeed in all our ways.

Nisyonos - Growing from the Hardships

It states, מוצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה, the ladder was on the ground, and its top reached the heaven. The Baal HaTurim writes, רמו למי שמושלך לארץ לפי שעה יעלה, השמימה, "This is to hint that if a person was thrown to the ground for a moment, he will [afterwards] go up to the heavens." Because after a descent one rises even higher.

Rebbe Hershele of Zidichoiv zt'l was honoring a simple person, immensely. The students asked him about that, because that person wasn't a scholar, and he didn't seem to be a tzaddik. Rebbe Hershele explained, "In one of my travels, I stayed by this man for a long time. He didn't give me more than dry bread and water each day, and he had me

sleep in his barn. I suffered physically, but because of it all I reached very great heights spiritually. Therefore, I have *hakaras hatov* for him..."

Rebbe Hershele added that it states (31:1), מאשר לאבינו עשה את כל הכבוד הזה. This can be translated: Lavan's children realized that because of their father, Lavan, who afflicted Yaakov, Yaakov reached his high levels.

Yaakov told his children (31:46), לקטו אבנים, to gather stones. But when the brothers took the stones it states, ויקחו אבנים. Rebbe Aharon of Belz *zt'l* explained that the stones imply tests and struggles. Yaakov told them לקטו, to pick them, as one picks out diamonds. Each struggle can be viewed as collecting precious gems, because one grows so much from those experiences. The brothers didn't recognize the benefit of those tests, and therefore it states ויקחו, they took the stones, as someone taking something out of the way. They didn't appreciate the immense value of each hardship.

It states (*Tehillim* 91:12), על כפים ישאונך פן

תגוף באבן רגליך, "Hashem carries you on His hands, lest your feet be hurt on a stone."

An old woman, who suffered a lot in her lifetime, asked, "Why didn't Dovid request that Hashem remove all the stones and hardships? Why did he only request that we be elevated above the stones, so the stones don't hurt us?"

The answer is, there will always be stones in our life, and they are for our benefit. Our request is that we should grow and become elevated by those tests, rather than to fall from them.

Leah suffered for seven years when she saw Yaakov working for Lavan to marry Rachel, because she feared she would end up marrying Eisav. But something good came from that in the end. Seder Olam tells that Rachel was *niftar* at the age of 37, and her twin sister Leah, was *niftar* at 44. This means that the final seven years of Leah's life she was Yaakov's only wife. Her seven years of hardships were paid off with seven years of being Yaakov's only wife. Because, as the Baal HaTurim writes, sometimes we fall to the ground, but immediately afterwards we reach the greatest levels. ³

3. There was once an astrologer who claimed he knew how to read the stars. The king trusted him and believed all his forecasts. But then someone slandered the astrologist to the king, claiming that he just makes things up, and doesn't really know anything at all. The king ordered one of his strong bodyguards to kill the astrologist. The king said to the bodyguard, "When I give my signal, shoot."

The bodyguard stood on the side, as the king asked the astrologist, "You say you know everything, so let me ask you, how are things with you now?"

"Matters aren't so good." He sensed there was a problem.

"And when do you think you will die?"

"I don't know. But I do know that I will die three days before the king dies."

The king became frightened. Instead of signaling to the guard to kill him, the king appointed

Tefillah

One of the primary gains from *yesurim* is the potential to turn your heart to Hashem. Hardships opens up a person's heart in *tefillah* in a way that he generally couldn't pray.

When we compare Yaakov's requests with the promises Hashem gave him, we see that all of Yaakov's desires were answered, except for two.

The following are Yaakov Avinu's requests: אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכל ובגד ללבוש ושבתתי... "If Hashem will be with me, and guard me on the path that I am going, and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I will return in peace to my father's home..." (25:20-21).

Hashem promised him almost all of these. Hashem said, והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתך, בכל אשר תלך והשיבותיך אל הארמה הזאת... "Behold I am with you, and will guard you wherever you go, and I will return you to this land..." (25:15).

But Yaakov's request, that he always

have bread and clothing (לחם לאכל ובגד (ללבוש), wasn't answered. The Midrash explains that Hashem didn't want to guarantee this, because then Yaakov wouldn't have any reason to daven. Hashem wanted there should always remain some difficulty, something lacking, so Yaakov would always be turning to Hashem in prayer.

This is often the reason for the hardships; to draw the person's heart to Hashem. Similar to what Chazal say, "Why were the *imahos* barren? It is because Hashem desires to listen to the prayers of *tzaddikim*." Hashem wants a connection with us, and sometimes, only hardships will establish that.⁴

Rachel asked Yaakov to pray for her to bear children. The Ramban writes, "When Yaakov became angry with Rachel and said, 'Am I G-d who prevented you from bearing children' (30:2) the *tzaddekes* (Rachel) saw she can't rely on Yaakov's *tefillos*, so she began to pray herself... and Hashem heard her prayers' (30:22)." Because

that very same guard to protect the astrologist from all harm. It was important to the king that the astrologist should live, for he felt that his life depends on it.

The astrologer realized that the situation he thought was a problem turned out to be his salvation, because he now had a full-time bodyguard. The moral of the story is, when we think we have problems, it's very likely that the problems are really the solution and the salvation.

4. It states in *Tehillim*, חנני ה' כי אליך אקרא כל היום, "Have mercy on me Hashem, because I am going to call you all day long" (86:3). The Arvei Nachal explains that the purpose of hardships is to spur people to daven. David HaMelech promised Hashem that he would continue to pray even when his *tzaros* pass, and his life is good and well. He said, חנני ה' כי אליך אקרא כל היום, "Have compassion on me Hashem, because I am going to call you all day long. Therefore, there's no reason for You not to save me. Don't say that You want the hardships so I will pray, כי אליך אקרא כל היום, because I will daven to you, regardless."

when one prays from the depths of his heart, his *tefillas* are answered.⁵

En route to Charan, Yaakov stopped at Har HaMoriah and he prayed at sunset, as it states *ויפגע במקום... כי בא השמש* (25:11). This was when Yaakov established *tefillas Maariv*. As Chazal tell us: Avraham instituted *Shacharis*, Yitchak *Minchah*, and Yaakov established *Maariv*.

On this *pasuk* (25:11) the Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba*, 68:10) states, "ויפגע במקום, Yaakov wanted to travel on, but the entire world became like a wall before him [preventing him from going

anywhere]. *כי בא השמש*, Chazal say Hakadosh Baruch Hu caused the sun to set earlier than usual because He wanted to speak to Yaakov in privacy. This can be compared to when a friend comes to a king, and the king says, 'Put out the candles and the lanterns. I want to speak to my friend in privacy.' Similarly, Hakadosh Baruch Hu had the sun set early, to speak with Yaakov in privacy."

We can explain this Midrash in the following way: The nighttime *ערבית tefillah* represents a person who's going through hard times, and is praying to be saved from those hardships. Even the

5. Someone came to Rebbe Yisrael of Kozhnitz zy'a, placed a gold coin on the table for a *pidyon* and said, "Someone stole a lot of money from me."

"I promise, I didn't do it," the Rebbe replied.

The man placed another gold coin on the table, and told some more details about his misfortune.

The Rebbe said, "If you give me fifty gold coins, you'll have your salvation."

The Yid turned to his wife and said, "Let's get out of here. We will pray ourselves and Hashem will help us."

The Rebbe said, "You've just received your salvation." Because there is nothing greater than a *tefillah* which emanates from one's heart.

If you loaned money to your fellow man and you know that the borrower is a pauper and isn't able to repay the debt, the Torah says, *לא תהיה לו כנושה*, "don't pester him for the money" (*Shemos* 22:24). The Chozeh of Lublin said, the Torah prohibits pestering the poor, *לא תהיה לו כנושה*, but from Hashem, one should continue asking until he gets his desires.

Reb Dovid of Lelov zy'a taught this lesson from this week's *parashah* where it states, *ויפגע במקום*, which means *tefillah*. *ויפגע* is similar to the Yiddish word *peiger* (pest) when one keeps asking over and over again for the same thing. *ויפגע במקום* can therefore mean that one should ask and ask from Hashem, until he receives his desires.

On the *pasuk*, *ויקץ יעקב משנתו ויאמר* (28:16) the Baal HaTurim writes, "The last letters spell *ציבור*, because a person's prayers are heard with a *tzibur* (together with a minyan)."

When Yaakov was on Har HaMoriah, he said, *זה שער השמים וישכם יעקב בבקר*, "This is the gateway of heaven. Yaakov awoke in the morning..." (28:17-18). The Baal HaTurim writes, "We learn from this that the gates of heaven are open at daybreak, *עלות השחר* and it's an ideal time for *tefillah*."

name, ערבית, is from the word ערב, which can mean mixed up or confusion. כי בא השמש, the sun set. כי בא, can be read כבה, extinguished, as the Midrash says in the *mashal* that the king requested all the lights to be put out. All these represent darkness and hardships. The Midrash states that wherever Yaakov turned he

perceived a wall before him. This alludes to the feeling many people have when they're going through hard times. They feel they have nowhere to turn, and wherever they go they're confronted with another wall. Hashem says, exactly at times like this I want to speak with you.

I want to hear your *tefillah*.

Bas Ayin

Tuesday, the 12th of Kislev, is the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Avraham Dov Aurbach ben Reb Dovid ז"ל of Avritch, the Bas Ayin, one of the great Rebbes of two hundred years ago. Towards the end of his life he moved to Tzefas, and is buried there.

The wisest of all men, Shlomo HaMelech, teaches (*Mishlei* 25:27), אכול וחקר כבודם כבוד רבש הרבה לא טוב, The Meiri explains that the *pasuk* means that although honey is sweet, too much of it will make you sick. But when it comes to praising tzaddikim, there is no limit, because when people hear the praises of tzaddikim, they will emulate their ways.

Especially on the *yahrtzeit* of a tzaddik, it is even more important to discuss the tzaddik's ways and to study his *divrei Torah*.

As the Rema MiPano ז"ל (*Kanfei Yonah*) writes, "The secret of a *hilulah*, *yahrtzeit*, of a tzaddik is that in heaven all the worlds are discussing the good deeds and *chiddushei Torah* of this tzaddik... This is hinted in Chazal (*Brachos* 6:), אגרא רבי, הילולא, [which can be translated] on a *yahrtzeit*, of a tzaddik, אגרא, the reward [and what one should be occupied

in is] מילי, the words of Torah that this tzaddik spoke and taught."

So, we see that on the day of a tzaddik's *yahrtzeit* it is even more important to discuss the praises of that tzaddik, and to repeat his *divrei Torah*, because that is the primary discussion in heaven.

The *Zohar* calls a *yahrtzeit* "*hilula*" which literally translated is a wedding. What is the connection?

According to the Rema MiPano, the explanation is as follows:

If someone will stand up at a wedding and speak on any section of Torah other than what's related to the *chasunah*, people will tell him, "It's all very interesting, but this isn't the right time. This is a *chasunah*. Now all speeches should be about the *chasunah*." A *yahrtzeit* is called a *chasunah*, because in heaven, everyone is speaking the *divrei Torah* of that tzaddik and are discussing his good deeds. All other conversations are inappropriate at this time.

The Yismach Yisrael ז"ל (של ישראל), מאורן של ישראל, (י"ד שבט) writes, "A *yahrtzeit* is called a *hilula*, because just as by a *chasunah* the *kesubah* is read before the *chasan* to

remind the *chasan* of his obligations to the *kallah*, similarly, on the *yahrtzeit* of a tzaddik we remind the tzaddik of his obligation to his chassidim.”

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* explains that a *yahrtzeit* is called a *hilula* (*chasunah*) because just as people give presents to the *chasan* and *kallah* at a *chasunah*, Hashem gives presents to the tzaddik on his *yahrtzeit*.

Hashem gives the tzaddik the present he desires, and the tzaddik primarily desires to have the ability to bestow kindness to Yidden. Thus, on a *yahrtzeit*, Hashem grants the tzaddik the ability to *mashpia* goodness to klal Yisrael.

The Gemara (*Chulin 7*) says, “Tzaddikim are greater after their demise than during their lifetime,” so the tzaddikim who performed wonders and kindness for the Jewish nation in their lifetime, certainly do so after their demise, too.

Nevertheless, there is something that prevents tzaddikim from bestowing goodness to the world. To explain, we’ll tell a story:

There was an evil decree on Klal

Yisrael, and Rebbe Elimelech of Lizensk *zt'l* told his student, Reb Mendel Riminover *zt'l*, that after his *petirah*, he will work in heaven and he won’t rest until the decree is abolished. Rebbe Elimelech was *niftar* and the evil decree was still threatening.

Rebbe Elimelech came to Rebbe Mendel Riminover in a dream and explained to him why he wasn’t abolishing the harsh decree. He explained, “Here in heaven, I see how everything is for the good, so why should annul the decree?”

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz *zt'l* says that this factor prevents tzaddikim in heaven from praying for the Jewish nation. From their perspective in heaven everything is good, so why should they pray for us?

But on the *yahrtzeit*, a part of his *neshamah* comes down to the grave. He is back in this world and sees the hardships people are going through. This inspires the tzaddik to pray, and since the root of his *neshamah* is under Hashem’s throne, he davens from there and annuls the harsh decrees.⁶

6. Rashi (*Bereishis 27:1*) writes, “At the time when Yitzchak was bound on the *mizbeiach* and his father was about to sacrifice him, the gates of heaven opened and the *malachim* saw the *akeidah* and they began to cry. Their tears fell into Yitzchak’s eyes, and that weakened his eyesight.”

Why did the heavens need to open for the *malachim* to see what happens in this world? The answer is, the *malachim* can always see what’s happening in this world, but they generally see things from heaven’s perspective so they don’t see the *tzaros*. They see that everything is good. But when the heavens open, the *malachim* can see the world from our perspective, which brings them to tears.

Wonders and Miracles

The Bas Ayin helped people during his lifetime, and he certainly continues to do so from his place in heaven.

It is known that there was a devastating earthquake in Tzefas year 5597/1836. Almost a thousand people perished under the rubble.

The Bas Ayin was in his *beis medresh* when the earthquake began. He told everyone to come to his side of the room. When everyone was near him, the roof over the other half of the *beis medresh* collapsed.⁷

At this time, the Bas Ayin threw himself to the ground and prayed. Later he explained why he needed to pray on the ground: "I saw the stones were falling sideways, and not downwards. I understood that this meant the *samech mem* (the Satan) was executing this disaster. When this occurs, the only protection is total humility. That's why I fell to the ground."

This story is an example of the salvation the Bas Ayin performed for Yidden in his lifetime. And just as he stopped the stones from falling on people in his time, he will certainly remove the stones that lie heavily on people's hearts in our times.

In תר"א there was a plague in Tzefas. Many people became ill, and many died. The Bas Ayin became ill and was sick for a few days. Before his demise, he said, "I'm the last victim of this plague. After me, no one will die." And that's what happened.

It seems that the Bas Ayin agreed to die in this plague so his death should atone for others, and the plague will stop. This is another example of the Bas Ayin's *mesirus nefesh* to help Yidden during his lifetime. Certainly then, after his demise, and especially on his *hilulah*, he will be granted the ability to bestow much goodness on the Jewish nation.⁸

7. Today, when one visits the Bas Ayin's *beis medresh*, he sees that the ceiling has two levels. This is from the earthquake, when half of the ceiling collapsed.

8. Once, the *levayah* of a simple person passed the Bas Ayin's home, and he went outside to join them until after the burial. People wondered about this, because the Bas Ayin hardly ever left his home, and this time he remained until the end.

But the *niftar* wasn't as simple as people thought. When the *chevrah kadishah* did the *taharah* they saw that the top of the *niftar's* legs were black. They asked the new widow about this and she explained, "Fifty years ago, my husband was a merchant and he traveled to *chutz le'aretz* to sell his wares. He had many difficult tests there. He was even engaged to marry a non-Jewish woman. At the wedding hall there was a barrel filled with hot coals to provide heating. My husband jumped into the barrel to save himself from sin. His scars come from that time. The bride's family thought he was insane and threw him out of the hall. That's how he was saved from sinning.

The Bas Ayin said that he saw a column of fire going in front of this man's coffin, and the

The closer one is to the tzaddik, the more presents and goodness he can receive. Therefore, fortunate are those who do something in honor of the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*, such as to daven at his *kever*, to make a *seudah* in his memory, to learn his *divrei Torah*, and primarily to follow in his ways. That creates a connection with this holy tzaddik, and he will more easily receive the *yeshuos* that come about on this day.

The *Seudas Hilulah*

The Beis Avraham (Noach) writes, "When there is a *seudas hilulah*, to celebrate the *yahrtzeit* of a tzaddik, even those who never knew the tzaddik, and even those who never heard *divrei Torah* from the tzaddik, when they gather to follow his ways, and they tell holy stories about this tzaddik, and they repeat his *divrei Torah* that he taught Yidden the path to serve Hashem, this grants them a connection with that tzaddik..."

The Tosher Rebbe *zy'a*, in his *sefer Avodas Avodah*, writes, "I know a family in Eretz Yisrael who needed a *yeshuah*. The head of this family made a *seudah* for ten people in honor of the Bas Ayin on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*, and he received his *yeshuah*."

Reb Shlomo Gross *z'l* was a Slonimer Chassid from Tzefas who sold kerosene for his *parnassah*, but he was always extremely tight, financially. There was barely food in his home. The night of the

Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit* he went to the *beis hachaim* and prayed at the Bas Ayin's grave, begging Hashem that his *parnassah* should be easier. That night he saw the Bas Ayin in his dream. The Bas Ayin said, "I appreciate that you prayed at my grave [as the *Zohar* states that tzaddikim have pleasure when people daven at their graves] but why didn't you make a *seudah* for me?"

In the morning Reb Shlomo Gross gathered ten people for a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. After the *seudah*, he bought a lottery ticket and won a large sum of money. He donated a portion to the Slonimer Yeshiva, and requested that the yeshivah use this money annually to make a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin.

(Reb Shlomo Gross requested that they should use white tablecloths for the *seudah*, and he had a few other requests to make this *seudah* special and inspirational.) This tradition continues until today in the Slonimer Yeshivos, still funded by the money Reb Shlomo Gross earned on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*.

One of the *gedolei hador shlita* had a divorced daughter, and for a long time, they couldn't find a *shidduch* for her. He sent a group of his students to Tzefas to make a *yahrtzeit seudah* for the poor people in Tzefas in honor of the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. Two weeks later she was engaged.

Gemara (*Kesubos*) says that this honor is given to only one or two people in each generation. He merited it because of this outstanding deed of *mesirus nefesh*, and the Bas Ayin wanted to participate in this special *levayah*.

The following happened in תשע"ז in Eretz Yisrael.

Tax collectors audited a certain man's business. They found that he has six telephones, although his business only needed two lines. They also saw that the business has two cars, though the business really only needed one. It was obvious he was declaring his own needs as business expenses, to avoid taxes.

He knew that the punishment for this could be imprisonment.

While the tax collectors were investigating for more evidence of tax evasion, he remembered the *segulah* of making a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. He promised that if everything turns out well, he will make a *seudas hilulah* on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*.

Immediately after making this *kabbalah*, the agents told him, "This time we will let it pass. But next time we come, make certain we don't find anything like this going on..."

A *yungerman* from Williamsburg went to his doctor, because he was having trouble falling asleep. He thought the doctor would prescribe sleeping pills, but the doctor asked him to take an EKG test. Immediately after the doctor saw the results he asked him, "When was the last time you were at your cardiologist?"

"A half year ago. Why? Is something wrong?"

"Yes, something is terribly wrong. Make an appointment as soon as possible."

"I'm busy for a few days... I will go to the cardiologist afterwards."

The doctor saw that he wasn't getting the point, so he said, "I will arrange the appointment for you." Within a few moments, he told him that he has an appointment for the next morning,

The cardiologist examined him and saw that one of the primary arteries was almost entirely blocked. He needed a stent, to widen the artery passage. The doctor wanted to do the surgery that very day, but the man said, "Please, there is something I have to take care of first. The manager of my bank told me that if I don't deposit a certain amount of money into the bank today, the account will be closed." While he was explaining his financial emergency to the doctor, his phone rang. It was the bank reminding him to bring the money.

The doctor replied, "O.K., you can take care of the bank. But tonight, at midnight, stop eating. Tomorrow we will do the procedure."

This *yungerman* immediately called up a friend, who was a *baal tzedakah* and a *baal chesed*, and asked him to lend him a large sum of money. He explained that he needed to put the money into the bank...and he told him about his operation.

As they spoke, this poor *yungerman* complained about his poverty. He said, "I do so many *segulos* for wealth and for *siyata dishmaya*, and it seems that none of them work. Take a look at me?"

I'm poor, and I have to borrow money... It doesn't seem that all those *segulos* are helping me in any way."

The *baal tzedakah* replied, "Certainly it helped you. Just think about the miracle that just happened to you. You went to the doctor because you weren't sleeping well, and that saved your life. Don't you see the miracle that is happening to you, perhaps specifically because of the *segulos* you do?"

The point was accepted.

The *baal tzedakah* added, "Tonight is the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. Why don't you light a candle and say some *Tehillim* in his merit, as a *segulah* for a successful operation tomorrow."

The *yungerman* replied, "Just this morning, in the *beis medresh* after *shacharis*, people were speaking about the *segulah* of making a *yahrtzeit seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin, and I mocked it. I said, 'Last year, I made a *seudah* for ten Yidden, and did it help me anything? Throughout the year I'm borrowing from one to pay off another.....' And then, someone in the *beis medresh* told me, 'How do you know the *segulah* didn't work? Perhaps you weren't destined to live this year, and because you made a *seudah* in the Bas Ayin's merit, you are alive?' Now it seems that he was speaking with *ruach hakodesh*. Perhaps my life was saved because of that *seudah*..."

He quickly arranged for a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. (He was cautious to finish his meal before midnight, when he began his fast.) The surgery was successful.

On the topic of *seudos*, we share the following story that the Bas Ayin told:

Someone once invited the Chernobyler Maggid *zy'a* to be the *sandak* at a bris.

"Are you making a *seudah* too?" the Chernobyler Maggid asked.

"No, just the bris *milah*. I can't afford a meal."

"Without a *seudah*, I won't come. I'll only come if there's a *seudah*."

"But what can I do? I can't afford it?"

"Tell your boss to lend you the money, and for the next few months, he'll pay you less until the debt is paid up."

The Chernobyler Maggid taught that the *yetzer hara* works very hard to prevent people from making a *seudah* for a *bris milah*. He said, "The *yetzer hara's* name is *סמא"ל*, which is *roshei teivos* for *סיום* *מעשות* *אין לעשות*, don't make a *seudah* for a *siyum*, *מעודת מצוה אין לעשות*, don't make a meal for a mitzvah, and *מעודת מילה אין לעשות*, don't make a *seudah* for a *milah*. The *yetzer hara* has succeeded to abolish the *seudah* for *siyumim*, but I won't let the *yetzer hara* succeed to annul the *seudah* for a *milah*..."

When the Bas Ayin repeated this discussion, he explained: Why was it so important for the Chernobyler Maggid that there be a meal at a bris?

When the Satan speaks in heaven before the heavenly court, and tells the sins of the Jewish people, the good *malachim* tell the court that the Jewish people aren't guilty for their *aveiros*, because they don't want to sin. The proof is, no Yid

ever made a *seudah* to celebrate an *aveirah*, but they do make festive meals when they perform mitzvos, such as by a *bris milah*. The heavenly court accepts this claim, and the Jewish nation is saved. However, if Klal Yisrael will stop making a *seudah* for a *bris milah*, and for other mitzvos, the *malachim* will lose their proof that the Jewish nation doesn't want to sin, and they won't have an answer for the Satan. That's why it was so important for the Chernobyler Magid that the Jewish people should have *seudos* at a *bris milah*.

Tefillos at the Kever of Tzaddikim

The Gemara (*Sotah* 14., see הגהות הב"ה) teaches, "Why was Moshe's grave concealed from people? It's because Hakadosh Baruch Hu knew the Beis HaMikdash will be destroyed and the Jewish nation will go to exile. If they will go to Moshe's grave, and cry, beg, and say, 'Moshe Rabbeinu, pray for us' Moshe will stand up and pray and terminate the exile. Because tzaddikim are more precious to Hashem after their demise than when they were alive..." This couldn't be, because the *galus* had to happen, therefore Moshe's grave is concealed from us.

This Gemara gives us a glimpse of how special the privilege of davening at *kivrei tzaddikim* is. Unfortunately, we don't know where Moshe Rabbeinu's *kever* is, however, we can daven at other tzaddikim's grave, and that will bring immense results.

Another indication to the specialness of *kivrei tzaddikim* is the Rashi (beginning

of *Vayechi*) which states, "[Yaakov said to Yosef] 'I buried Rachel on the road and I didn't bring her to Beis Lechem to bring her into Eretz Yisrael. I know you are upset with me because of that, however, know that it was by Hashem's decree, so she can help her descendants when Nuvazraden takes them into *galus*. Her descendants will pass by her grave, and Rachel will come forth from her grave and cry and pray for them.'"

This source also delineates the importance of *kivrei tzaddikim*.

The Minchas Elazar of Munkatch *zt'l* would sing "*Bar Yochai*" at his father's *kever* — the "Darkei Teshuvah— because his father wrote three *sefarim* on *Tikunei Zohar*, which was written by Reb Shimon bar Yochai.

One year, before he began singing *Bar Yochai* he explained the words, אשרי העם הם לומדיך (that are in the song). People generally translate it, "Fortunate is the nation who learn your *divrei Torah*." The problem is that it should be, אשרי העם הלומדים תורתך, or something like that. The way it is written (אשרי העם הם לומדיך) it means the nation teaches something to Reb Shimon bar Yochai.

The explanation is, there is something that we teach tzaddikim. We teach them about the gezeiros and hardships that the Jewish nation is enduring. Heaven sometimes conceals the harsh decrees from tzaddikim, so they won't know about them and they won't be able to annul them. People come to the *kever* and they *teach* the tzaddik about those

matters that were concealed from them (הם לומדיך) so they will daven for Klal Yisrael.” After saying this, the Minchas Elazar told his father the many *gezeiros* and hardships that had befallen the Jewish nation, so his father could daven in heaven on their behalf.

There was a childless person who would often go to Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt'l*⁹ to ask him to daven for him for children. Each time he came, he gave the Rebbe a *kvittel* and a *pidyon*. This happened many times. At last, the *yeshuah* came. A son was born.

Shortly afterwards Rebbe Elimelech was *niftar*, and then the boy was *niftar*, as well.

The father knew what he had to do. He brought his son to Rebbe Elimelech's *kever* and said, “When I asked you to daven for children and when I gave you all those *pidyonos*, this wasn't my intention.” He put the child down and began leaving the *beis hachayim*.

Soon afterwards, the boy stood up, alive and well. Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk told the boy in a loud voice, “Dear Child! Shout ‘Father! Father!’ with all your might, so your father will hear you before he leaves the cemetery, and you won't be left here by yourself.”

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* told this story when he was visiting his father's grave, the Sar Shalom of Belz, *zt'l*. Rebbe Yehoshua added, “Now that we are near my father's grave, we should

also shout ‘Father! Father! I'm here. Don't leave us!’”

Belief in *Tefillah*

The Bas Ayin arrived in Tzefas on Rosh Chodesh Elul. He planned to stay in Tzefas for the *yomim tovim*, and then move to Yerushalayim after Simchas Torah. On Hoshanah Rabba he heard a woman tell her son, “Yerachmiel! Go bring down the carpets from the roof. Tomorrow Yidden will *bench Geshem* in the *batei knesiyos* and they will daven for rain. Their *tefillos* will certainly be answered, it will rain strongly, and everything will get wet.”

When the Bas Ayin heard this, he said he wants to remain in Tzefas, to be among people who believe in *tefillah* like that.

In this week's *parashah*, Rachel told Yaakov (30:1), הבה לי בנים ואם אין מתה אנכי, “Bring me children, because if not, I am like dead.”

Yaakov responded (30:2), התחת אלקים אני, “Am I in Hashem's place to bring you children?”

Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* explained their conversation based on a fundamental difference of when one prays for himself and when one asks a *tzaddik* to pray for him. When one prays to Hashem for himself, even if his belief in Hashem isn't perfect, the *tefillah* is still sufficient, and Hashem will answer his *tefillos* and perform miracles for him. But when one asks a *tzaddik* to pray for

9. Some say this story happened with the Baal Shem Tov *zt'l*.

him, the *yeshuah* is dependent on the extent that he believes in the tzaddik. If he doesn't believe fully in the tzaddik, the tzaddik can't pray for him. Therefore, Yaakov told Rachel, התחה אלקים אני, "I'm not like Hashem. One can pray to Hashem, even when the emunah isn't perfect. But if you ask me to pray, you have to believe in me. But I see you don't, because you said הבה לי בנים ואם אין... 'Bring me children, and if not...' You aren't certain I can help you. If you don't believe in me, I am unable to help you."

Similarly, when one goes to a tzaddik's *kever* to daven, the effect of his *tefillah* is largely dependent on his *emunah* in the tzaddik.

Miracles that Happened through *Tefillah* at the Bas Ayin's *Kever*

Teves, תשע"ה, a woman davened at the Bas Ayin's *kever* and promised that if her older brother (who was forty years old) becomes a *chasan* within a month, she and her family will make a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. It will be a *seudas hilulah* and a *seudas hoda'ah*, together.

Within thirty days, on the 22nd of Teves, her forty-year-old brother became a *chasan*! On the 12th of Kislev, they had a large celebration on the *yahrtzeit*, as she promised.

When one goes through hard times, and then he has a salvation, it is often hard to connect the dots and to know for certain which *segulah* or which prayer brought about the salvation. But

sometimes there are hints to help us determine.

The following story is an example:

I heard the story directly from the *baal maaseh* (from the person to whom the story occurred). This man was childless for many years, and after many medical tests, the doctors told him that there was nothing known to medicine to help them bear children. They even said that it was impossible for them to ever bear a child.

He davened at the Bas Ayin's *kever* on ה"ב כסלו, תשע"ה, the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. A year later, on ה"ב כסלו, תשע"ט, his son was born.

The Bas Ayin never had children; therefore, people consider his *kever mesugal* for davening for children. There was a childless couple from Kiryat Sefer, who couldn't daven at the Bas Ayin's *kever* because the husband was a *cohen*. They decided they would go to the Bas Ayin's *beis medresh* and daven from there.

He says, "As soon as we began our *tefillos*, our tears and our prayers stormed the heavens. At that time, I made a *kabbalah* that if we have a child, we will repeat a *vort* from the Bas Ayin at the Shabbos *seudah*, every Shabbos for the first year." Their *tefillos* were answered.

We know this story, because this *yungerman* was once in Bnei Brak, visiting his father-in-law, and he was looking in a *beis medresh* for the *sefer Bas Ayin*. He met Reb Yeshayah Tishler *shlita* and asked him where he can find

a *Bas Ayin*. Reb Yeshayah told him, “This beis medresh doesn’t have one. But you can come to my home and I will lend you a *Bas Ayin*.”

As they were walking to his home, Reb Yeshayah asked, “Do you want specifically a *Bas Ayin*, or is any other Chassidic sefer also good?”

He replied, “I want specifically a *Bas Ayin* because I repeat a *vort* of the *Bas Ayin* every Shabbos meal, and now I am visiting my father-in-law, and I don’t have the *sefer*...” And he told Reb Yeshayah his story, and the salvation that happened to him.

There’s a family of *baalei teshuvah* in the Meah She’arim neighborhood of Yerushalayim, without money, and without financial support from their families. Making matters even harder, their washing machine broke. The wife said that without a washing machine, the children won’t have clean clothes to wear...

The head of this family was walking around the streets of Meah Shearim, to see if he can find a second hand store that sells washing machines.

As he was going from store to store, he met up with Reb Motel Rothman *shlita*. The *yungerman* expressed his financial hardships to Reb Motel, and the latest one, that he needs to buy a second-hand washing machine.

Reb Motel tried to convince him that he shouldn’t buy a second-hand machine because you can never know what problems will suddenly come up, but the

yungerman was insistent that he can’t afford a new one, and his only solution was to buy a used machine.

Reb Motel Rothman told him, “Today is the *Bas Ayin*’s *yahrtzeit*. Many miracles happen by the *tefillos* said on his grave. Let’s go there, and *be’ezeras Hashem* you will have a *yeshuah*.”

They traveled together. Throughout the trip, the *yungerman* was speaking about washing machines, the various brands and sizes, expressing the benefits and disadvantages of each one. It was obvious that this matter lay heavily on his mind.

They came to the *tzion* of the *Bas Ayin*, and each of them davened for their individual needs. Then they drove off to Miron to daven at Reb Shimon bar Yochai’s kever, and to make a *seudas hilula* in honor of the *Bas Ayin*. After davening in Miron, they went to a local supermarket to buy food for the *yahrtzeit* celebration. Immediately as they left the supermarket this *yungerman*’s cell phone rang. It was a Chinese auction – *tzedakah* that he invested in some time back. They called to tell him that he had just won...a new washing machine!

Reb Mottel Rothman says that he also had a *yeshuah* on that day – but he had a far greater *yeshuah*. Because he davened for more important matters than a washing machine. Because when the gates of heaven are open, and we have the opportunity to ask for whatever we want, we should be wise to ask for greater things, and not just for a washing machine.

Anavah – Humility

The Bas Ayin was already on the boat in the port of Odessa, Ukraine, to travel to Eretz Yisrael, and his devoted chassidim from Avritch were with him on the ship, to spend another few moments with their great Rebbe before he leaves them. They asked him, “What can we do to maintain our connection with you, even after you leave?”

The Bas Ayin replied, “Hashem obligates us *ובו תדבק*, to be attached to Hashem. Chazal ask, ‘How is it possible for a human being to be attached to Hashem? Rather, it means to attach oneself to Hashem’s attributes. As Hashem is compassionate, so shall you be compassionate...’ This source teaches us that one becomes attached to another when one emulates their good *middos*. Therefore, if you will emulate the *middos* that I trained myself in since my youth, we will be united. Even from the distance, our connection will be like face to face. I have three primary *middos* that I trained myself to be cautious in since my youth. They are: caution from speaking *lashon hara*, lies, and from arrogance. If you take up these three attributes, you will be united with me.”

One of the primary themes of the *sefer Bas Ayin* is humility.

The Bas Ayin is buried in a cave, in the old cemetery of Tzfas. To come to his *kever*, one needs to bend low. Tzaddikim said that this exemplifies the Bas Ayin’s

humility. Even to come to his grave, one must bow and lower himself.

The Bas Ayin teaches that the Chanukah menorah is placed below ten *tefachim*, because a person must bend with humility to earn miracles.

Ahavas Yisrael

Very important lessons in *ahavas Yisrael* are found in the holy *sefer Bas Ayin*. For example, the Bas Ayin writes (*Chukas chasadim* is when you feel your fellow man’s pain as though it were your own. *ד"ה א"י זאת הקת*), “The primary *gemilus chasadim* is when you feel your fellow man’s pain as though it were your own. *אה דל"ת אהר* spells *אה דל"ת*, to consider yourself as the brother of the poor. [A brother feels the pain of his siblings, and he tries to help in any way he can. This is how we should feel towards every Yid.] I heard from the Berditchover Rav *zt'l* who repeated it in the name of the Maggid of Mezritch that one of the thirteen attributes for the derivations of the Torah is *גזירה שווה*. This means, when your fellow man is suffering from some matter, you should feel the pain together with your fellow man, exactly as he feels it.” *גזירה*, the *gezeiros* and hardships of your fellow man, *שווה*, you should feel them equally.

The Bas Ayin (*ד"ה והוא שמיני*) discusses the people who externally make the impression that they love their fellow man, but internally, within their hearts, they think very negative and hateful thoughts towards their fellow man. The Bas Ayin says that a *chazir* represents

them, because a *chazir* puts forth its split hooves to show that it's kosher, but it doesn't chew its cud, because although from the outside, he seems kosher, internally, he isn't kosher. Similarly, these people show they are kosher from the outside, but inside their hearts, they hate their fellow man.

These people are preventing Moshiach from coming. When people will love

their fellow man externally and internally, in their deeds and in their hearts, Moshiach will come.

Therefore, when Moshiach comes, the *chazir* will have signs of kashrus, inside and outside, because it will have split hooves and chew its cud. The *chazir* of that era will represent the people of that era, who love their fellow man, inside and outside.¹⁰

10. The Midrash says that it is called חזיר because it will return to become kosher in the era of Moshiach. It will begin to chew its cud, and have both signs of kashrus (*Or HaChaim*).