

Torah Wellsprings

*Collected thoughts
from
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Vayetzei



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Torah Wellsprings

Vayetzei - Bas Ayin

The Power of Tefillah

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter Shlita tells a story of two neighbors in Yerushalayim, who lived on opposite sides of the street. They both learned in kollel, but looking at their front doors, one immediately recognized that when it came to money, they weren't in the same financial bracket. The entrance of one shouted poverty, while the other one noticeably had money.

Sometimes, the poorer neighbor saw the mailman bring an envelope filled with money to the neighbor across from him. He understood that his neighbor was better off financially because of these periodical gifts, and he was curious to know who was sending the cash.

One day, when the mailman came with the

package, this neighbor bent over his head to try to make out the name on the envelope. His heart fell when he read the name. The sender of this generous gift was his chavrusah and good friend from years before. He asked himself, "Why does he send money to my neighbor and not to me?"

He was so bothered that he couldn't fall asleep. In the morning, he wrote to his friend. "I am still friends with you. The friendship of our youth is still fresh in my memory. Nevertheless, I cannot hold back from writing these words. How could you forget me and send money to my neighbor? I try to judge you favorably, but I haven't succeeded in doing so."

Five days later, he received a response. The letter had just six words:

"My dear friend, you never asked." In other words, he was saying, "How can I know that you don't have money? I don't have ruach hakodesh to know these things. Ask, and you will also receive."

Similarly, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I want to give you a lot. Just ask for it and I will give it to you immediately." (There is a difference between the mashal and the nimshal, because the wealthy friend had no way to know that his friend needed money, whereas, Hashem knows who needs money, even before we ask for it. Nevertheless, Hashem established the world in a way that to receive, one has to ask for it.)

A family came to Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt'l and told him that their sons die when they are young, r'l. The girls live, but the boys are niftar. Reb Yosef Chaim told them, "It seems that you suffer from an ayin hara. Therefore, when you have sons in the future, I advise that you don't buy new clothes for them. They should wear second-hand

clothes, items that your extended family gives you, or you can take clothes from *gemachim*, and the like, but don't buy new clothes for them. If your sons ask for new clothes, then you can buy them. Otherwise, they should only wear second-hand clothes."

This family had a child, a son, and they were careful to dress him in second-hand clothes. Even for the bris, they didn't buy new clothes for the child. When the child was three years old, and there was a *chalahkah*, the parents thought that perhaps the child would ask for new clothes, like other children his age received, but the child didn't ask for it, so he didn't get it.

At his bar mitzvah, his parents also didn't buy new clothes for him. When the bachur was engaged, he didn't wear new clothes for the vort.

The chasunah was approaching, and the boy noticed that his parents

weren't planning to buy new clothes for him. As far as he knew, his parents weren't particularly poor, so this time, he humbly asked them for at least a new shirt for his chasunah. His mother showed him a drawer in their home. There was a lot of money in it. She told him, "This is the money we put aside to buy clothes for your *chalachah*, for your bar mitzvah, and for your engagement. If you had requested, you would have received all this."

The nimshal is a lesson in tefillah. Hashem has a lot to give us. If we ask for it, we will receive.

Halichos Shlomo (from Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l, ch.9, הערה 16) writes that the most mesugal place for tefillos to be answered is at the end of Tachanun, after the prayer שומר ישראל, before saying the paragraph מתרצה ברחמים. Reb Shlomo Zalman said that one should pray at this place for his needs in a manner that no one knows that he is doing so. Reb Shlomo

Zalman said that he read in a sefer that the requests said at that time are more likely to be answered than the tefillos one says in Shemoneh Esrei (however, as the sefer Halichos Shlomo points out, this is a great chiddush).

Reb Shlomo Zalman added, "The main thing is that one must believe that whenever we pray, Hashem will hear our tefillos – at any hour of the day. One can say Tehillim, or one can utter a tefillah in his own words, beginning with the words יהי רצון מלפניך, "it shall be Your will..." and he can say Hashem's name, and ask all his requests.

Similarly, Igros Chazon Ish (vol.3, 23) writes, "A person is allowed to make a short tefillah for his needs, and he can say Hashem's name. He can say this tefillah at any time of the day; it doesn't have to be in Shemoneh Esrei. He should begin the tefillah with the words יהי רצון מלפניך."

The Gemara (Nedarim 50a) tells that Reb Akiva's wife sent him to study Torah. After twelve years of studying Torah from the *Tanaim* Reb Eliezer and Reb Yehoshua, he returned home. He didn't go inside his house yet, and from behind the door, he heard a *rasha* say to his wife, "Your father acted correctly [when he forbade you from enjoying anything of his wealth]. First of all, you married someone who isn't like you [because when they married, Reb Akiva was an *am ha'aretz*]. Secondly, your husband left you like an *almanah* all these years."

Reb Akiva's wife replied, "If he would listen to me, I would tell him to learn Torah for another twelve years in yeshiva."

When Reb Akiva heard this, he said, "Since she gives me permission, I will go back to yeshiva." He studied for another twelve years in yeshiva. Then he returned home with 24,000 students.

The renowned question is why Reb Akiva didn't come into his home to say hello to his wife. He was at the door of his house. Why did he abruptly turn around and return to his yeshiva?

Reb Akiva knew that his wife was *davening* for him to become a talmid chacham. After twelve years, he already had 12,000 students. (After another twelve years, he had 24,000.). If she were to discover the greatness in Torah that her husband attained, her tefillos wouldn't be as passionate anymore. Having a husband, a Rosh yeshiva of 12,000 students, is also a fine accomplishment. Therefore, Reb Akiva didn't go home. He didn't want his wife to know his accomplishments, so that her tefillos that he grow in Torah will continue.

Praising Hashem

When a person praises Hashem for His kindness, he will receive more. It can be compared to when a

mother gives a meal to her son. If he praises his mother and tells her how good it tastes, the mother desires to give him another portion. Similarly, when we praise Hashem, Hashem wants to give us more.

This is written in the Siforno in last week's parashah (27:27). When Yaakov brought food to Yitzchak, the pasuk states, וַיְבַרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רֵיחַ רֵיחַ בְּנֵי פְרִיחַ שָׂדֶה "He blessed him, and he said, 'Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field, which Hashem has blessed! And may Hashem give you...'"

The Siforno writes, "You, my son, see and think about this smell. In addition to the fact that food gives life, it also has a pleasurable smell. This is an example of Hashem's kindness. When you think about Hashem's kindness, וַיֵּתֶן לָךְ הָאֱלֹקִים, Hashem will give you more blessings." This is as we are explaining; the more a person recognizes Hashem's

kindness, the more he will receive.

It states (29:35) וַתֵּהָר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתֹּאמֶר הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת ה' עַל כֵּן קָרָאתָהּ, "She conceived again and bore a son, and she said, 'This time, I will thank Hashem!'" Therefore, she named him Yehudah." Maharam Shik writes, "When a person has genuine hakaras hatov, it isn't enough to praise Hashem once. The praise of Hashem should always be engraved in his heart. This is the reason the Avos would name places in commemoration of a miracle or a kindness that occurred there. They did this always to remember the chesed that happened to them. It was also for the future generations, until the final generation, that they should praise Hashem for His chesed, as there is a brachah: בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, 'Bless Hashem Who performed miracles for our forefathers...' The tzadekes Leah would also do this. She made signs to

remember... and never to forget to do her obligation to praise Hashem for His kindness. When her fourth son was born, which was more than her portion, she wanted to remember to praise Hashem for His kindness. She said to herself, 'After all this kindness, is it enough to praise Hashem once? I should *always* be praising Hashem. His praise shouldn't leave my lips. Therefore, she called him יהודה, to remember her love for Hashem. Whenever she would say her son's name, she would remember Hashem's kindness. Therefore, Leah said, הפעם אודה את ה' which should be read as a question, 'Should I praise Hashem only once?' It isn't proper for me to do so. I should praise Hashem all the time. על כן קראה שמו יהודה, therefore, she called his name Yehudah, which means to praise Hashem constantly.

Leah called her third son Levi. As it states (29:34) ויתבר עוד (29:34) ויתלד בן ויתאמר עתה הפעם ילנה אישי אלי

כי ילדתי לו שלשה בנים על כן קראה שמו לוי, "She conceived again and bore a son, and she said, "Now this time my husband will accompany me, for I have borne him three sons; therefore, He named him לוי" (because לוי means ילוה, accompanied).

Rashi (29:34) writes, "The *Imahos* were *nevi'os* (prophets), and they knew that Yaakov would bear twelve tribes. He married four wives. Leah said [when Levi was born], Now he won't be able to complain about me because I took all my portion in the children." Four wives were to bear twelve children, and when Levi was born, Leah said that she had done her portion.

When Yehudah, her fourth son, was born, Leah said (29:35) ועתה אודה את ה' "This time I will praise Hashem."

Rashi (29:35) writes, הפעם אודה. שנמלתי יותר מחלקי, מעתה יש לי להודות, "Now I will praise... because I took more than my portion. Now I must praise Hashem."

The meforshim explain that she wasn't only praising Hashem for her fourth child. She realized now that she should praise Hashem for her first three children as well. When she saw Hashem's chesed that He gave her more than her portion, she understood that the first children she bore were also Hashem's kindness and not nature, which is so easily taken for granted.

Tiferes Shlomo (Moadim, Tefillah) explains the pasuk (Tehillim 107:1) *הֲדוּ לֹה' כִּי טוֹב*, when one praises Hashem for His kindness, *כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד*, the kindness will continue forever.

Also, it states (Ibid. 107:8) *יִדּוּ לֹה' חֶסֶד*, when one praises Hashem for the salvation, even before it comes, *וְנִפְלְאוֹתָיו*, he will merit that the salvation will come, and then he will publicize the miracle to people.

It states in parashas Toldos (25:21) *וַיַּעֲתֵר יִצְחָק לֹה' לְנִכְחַ* *אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עָקְרָה הוּא וַיַּעֲתֵר לוֹ ה' וַתֵּהָרֵם*, *רַבְקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ*, "Yitzchak prayed

to Hashem opposite his wife because she was barren, and Hashem accepted his prayer, and Rivkah his wife conceived.

Rashi writes that Yitzchak davened in one corner, Rivkah davened in another corner, and they prayed for children. They were barren for so long, we might assume that their tefillos were sent up to Hashem through bitter crying. However, it is written in sefarim that *לְנִכְחַ* is *roshei teivos* for *הי נשמת כל חי*, because Yitzchak and Rivkah established this tefillah. Even when they prayed for children, their request was dispersed within many praises to Hashem for His kindness. Hashem answered their tefillos and praises and gave them offspring.

At the end of Nishmas we say, *בפי ישרים תתרום*, etc. Rokeiach writes, "It is said that Yitzchak and Rivkah composed this tefillah when Yitzchak davened opposite his wife for children. This was the kabbalah of the

Anshei Kneses HaGedolah, and the tefillah was established to be said here... In honor of Yitzchak and Rivkah, the custom is that just the chazan says it, that in their merit, Hashem should do kindness with us."

Hashem is Close to the Poor and Suffering

The Abarbanel zt'l discusses why Leah didn't praise Hashem for her first three children, but only when Yehudah was born. It is because it's Hashem's way to have compassion for those who are sad and are going through hard times. Therefore, she felt she didn't have to praise Hashem for her first three children. We quote the Abarbanel: "In her mind, she felt that she knew the reason she had her first three children. It was from Hashem's justice and His compassion for all His creations. This is Hashem's way, to have compassion on those who are sad."

As we wrote, later, when Yehudah was born, she retroactively praised Hashem for her first three children, as well, because when she took more than her portion, she understood that the first three children were also chesed. Nevertheless, for our purpose, we learn from this lesson that when one goes through hard times, he will benefit from it. It is Hashem's way to take special care of those who are suffering.

The Torah tells us, ותרא רחל כי לא ילדה לעקב ותקנא רחל באחותיה ותאמר אל יעקב הבה לי בנים ואם אין מתה אנכי, "Rachel saw that she wasn't having children, and she was jealous of her sister. She said to Yaakov, 'Give me children, or I am like the dead.'"

ויחר אף יעקב ברחל ויאמר התחת אלהים אנכי אשר קנע ממך פרי בטן, "Yaakov became angry with Rachel, and he said, 'Am I in Hashem's place, who refrained you from [from bearing] children?' (30:1-2).

Bederech tzachus, Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zy"a said that Rachel purposely tried to get Yaakov Avinu angry. She saw that Leah was having children due to her suffering, so she sought to arouse Yaakov's anger toward her, so she would also merit having children.

Be'er Mayim Chaim (this week's parashah) writes, "This is what the poor and the suffering should think, to get chizuk. Behold it states (Yeshayah 57:15) *כִּי כֹה אָמַר דָּם וְנִשְׂאָא... מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֲשַׁכּוֹן וְאֵת דָּבָא וְשִׁפְלָא רוּחַ*, 'For so said the High and Exalted One...., "With the lofty and the holy ones I dwell, and with the crushed and humble in spirit..." Chazal say about this pasuk, *אני את דכא*, that Hashem is with the poor and the suffering. This is as it states (Tehillim 91:15) *עִמּוֹ אֲנִי בְצָרָה*, "I am with him in distress." And since Hashem is with him, what does he lack? Hashem has everything in His hands. This is the comforting thought he should have. The One who has everything in

His hands is with him! What possibly more can a person request, in this world or the next world, if he has the Shechinah residing with him? Hashem told Yaakov (28:14) *וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כַּעֲפַר הָאָרֶץ*, 'your seed shall be as the dust of the earth.' This implies that the Jewish nation will fall to low levels, down to the earth. Hashem added *וְהָיָה עִמּוֹ אֲנִי*, which means *אֲנִי עִמָּךְ*, [Hashem says], 'I will be with him, when he has a tzarah, and *אני את דכא*, I am with the downtrodden.' This will console him, and they will rejoice with their connection with the Creator."

In a dream, Yaakov Avinu saw malachim climbing up and down a ladder, and Hashem stood over him. When he awoke, he said (28:16) *אֲנִי יֵשׁ ה' בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה*, *וְאֲנִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי*, "Behold Hashem is in this place, and I did not know."

The Megaleh Amukos asks: Certainly, Yaakov Avinu knew that *מלא כל הארץ כבודו*, that Hashem's honor fills the world. Why then

was he surprised that Hashem was "in this place?"

He answers that at this time, Yaakov Avinu had suddenly become poor. As the Midrash (Bereishis 68:2) tells us, when Yaakov was going to Charan, Elifaz, the son of Eisav HaRasha, came and took away all his money and wealth. Yaakov Avinu thought about his situation, that in a moment he fell from the highest status to the lowest, and he dreamed about this that night. This is the nature of dreams, they reflect what one thinks about during the daytime, as it states (Daniel 2:29) רְעִיּוֹנָךְ עַל מְשֻׁבְּבְךָ סֵלְקוּ, "Your thoughts [during the daytime] came [to you] while on your bed." Rashi explains that Daniel told Nevuchadnezer, "What you were thinking about during the day, Hashem revealed to you in a dream."

Here as well, Yaakov was thinking about his new financial status, and Hashem answered his doubts and questions in this dream.

Hashem told Yaakov that poverty is the way of the world because in life, some become wealthy and some become poor. Hashem also hinted to him that his fate can change, and he can become wealthy again. Furthermore, Hashem showed him the extreme closeness that He has with those who are poor.

In his dream, Yaakov saw a סֹלֶם, a ladder. The ladder alludes to the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:4), which states: "Hakadosh Baruch Hu makes ladders, He lowers this person and raises that person..." This is what happened to Yaakov when he suddenly became poor. A hint to this idea is that סֹלֶם, ladder, is gematria עני, poverty. The ladder was סֹלֶם מֵצֵב אֶרֶצָה וְרָאשׁוֹ מֵגִיעַ (28:12) הַשָּׁמַיְמָה, "A ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven." This was a message for Yaakov that even if now he is at a moment of מֵצֵב אֶרֶצָה, a low situation, tomorrow it can

be וְרִאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה, his head reaches heaven.

The ladder with the malachim going up and down on it, and Hashem standing over Yaakov, taught Yaakov Avinu the closeness that Hashem has with the poor. The malachim going up and down the ladder represents the malachim who carry people's tefillos up to Hashem. As it states וְהָיָה מִלְאָכָי אֱלֹקִים עֲלֵימ וְיִרְדּוּ בּוֹ,

"Behold, angels of Hashem were ascending and descending upon it." But Yaakov didn't need malachim to raise his tefillos, as it states וְהָיָה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו, "Behold Hashem was standing over him." And as it states (Tehillim 69:34) כִּי שָׁמַע אֱלֹ בְּשִׁמְעוֹתָי, "Hashem listens to the needy." Hashem Himself stands by the poor and listens to their tefillos. They don't need malachim to elevate their tefillos.¹

1. Reb Dovid Feinstein zt'l said that if he were given the opportunity to host any three guests of his choice, who would he choose to bring into his home? Perhaps you think he would choose to invite the avos hakedoshim, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov? Or perhaps you think he would invite three tanaim, or three of the great rishonim, such as Rashi, Rabbeinu Tam... "No," he said, "I would choose three poor people, because Hashem is with them. As it states (Tehillim 109:31) כִּי יַעֲמֹד לְיָמִין אֲבִיּוֹן, "For He will stand at the right of the needy."

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 69:3) writes on the words, וְהָיָה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו, "Behold Hashem was standing over him," it can be compared to a king who sees a poor person from a good family lying on the way, in a field. The king protects him and guards him from wild animals. This is how Hashem protected Yaakov from Eisav and from Lavan.

The Shach on the Torah quotes this Midrash and brings a hint from the words וְהָיָה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו, that the first letters spell עני, indicating that Hashem is with the poor.

Megaleh Amukos writes, "When he saw the benefits of the poor (Tehillim 109:31) כִּי יַעֲמֹד לִימִין אֲבִיוֹן, "For He will stand at the right of the needy," Yaakov said, אֲכֹן יֵשׁ ה' בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה, "Behold, Hashem is in this place, and I did not know." He meant to say that he didn't know the great benefit of the poor. He discovered that Hashem is always with the poor. They are the 'broken utensils' of the King."²

Yaakov Avinu said וְאֲנִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, I didn't know the great benefits of the poor in this world before Hashem. I didn't realize how close they are to Hashem. They don't need malachim to elevate their tefillah. Their tefillos go straight from their mouths to Hashem's ear.

This lesson isn't only about those who are poor,

in its literal sense. It is also for those who are going through hard times in their lives, and they feel broken. About them, it states (Tehillim 34:19) קָרוֹב ה' לְנִשְׁבָּרֵי לֵב וְאֶת דִּבְאֵי רוּחַ יוֹשִׁיעַ, "Hashem is close to the brokenhearted, and those crushed in spirit, He saves."

The meforshim ask why the Torah tells us the detail of the dream regarding the ladder, with the malachim going up and down? It seems that the primary part of the dream is the pesukim (28:13-15) which tells the brachos and promises Hashem gave to Yaakov, as it states, הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתָה שֹׁכֵב עָלֶיהָ לְךָ אֶתְנַנָּה וְלִזְרָעָךְ, וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ בְּעֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ ... וְהָיָה אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וְשִׁמְרְתִּיךָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ וְהִשְׁבַּתִּיךָ אֶל הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי לֹא אֶעֱזָבְךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר אִם עָשִׂיתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ, "The ground upon which you are lying, to you will I give it and to your

2. With these last words, the Megaleh Amukos alludes to the Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 7:2), which states, "For a regular person, it is disgraceful to use broken utensils, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu's utensils are broken, as it states (Tehillim 34:19) קָרוֹב ה' לְנִשְׁבָּרֵי לֵב, 'Hashem is near the broken-hearted.'

descendants. Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth... Behold, I am with you; I will guard you wherever you go..."

The holy sefarim explain that the story of the ladder teaches an essential lesson, which Yaakov had to learn before he went to galus. Rashi explains that the malachim came to protect him. First, the malachim of Eretz Yisrael went up to heaven, and then the malachim of chutz l'aretz came down to go with him to Charan. Until the malachim of chutz l'aretz came down, Yaakov had a moment when he was alone, and he needed protection. Therefore, it states וַהֲגִידָהּ ה' בְּצֵב עָלָיו, "Behold Hashem is standing over him." Hashem was protecting him at this moment when he was alone.

This was an important lesson for Yaakov Avinu at this time. Until now, Yaakov

was living in Eretz Yisrael, in his father's Yitzchak Avinu's home, and studying in the yeshivos of Shem and Ever. Now he had to run away because his brother Eisav wanted to kill him. And where was he going? To חרן, and the translation of חרן is anger, hinting at Hashem's anger. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:13, and Rashi above, 11:32) says that this represents חרונו של עולם, the anger of the world. Furthermore, the Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:10) states, Yaakov wanted to travel on, but נעשה העולם כולו כמין כותל לפניו, the entire world became like a wall for him, preventing him from traveling on. The "wall" was the sensation of the tzaros that were surrounding him. To encourage him, Hashem showed Yaakov that whenever he is alone or in danger, וַהֲגִידָהּ ה' בְּצֵב עָלָיו, Hashem will come and protect him.³

3. On the words וַהֲגִידָהּ ה' בְּצֵב עָלָיו, the Gemara (Chullin 91b) says, אלמלא, מוקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאמרו כאדם שמוניף על בנו "If the pasuk didn't say it, we

wouldn't be able to say it. It was like a person who fans his son" to keep him comfortable. Such is the description of the care and love that Hashem showed for Yaakov Avinu.

At Maariv, we say השכיבנו אבינו לשלום והעמידנו מלכנו לחיים טובים ושלום (in nusach Sefard). Loosely translated, this means, "Our *Father*, let us sleep in peace, and awaken us, our *King*, for good life and peace."

For going to sleep, we address Hashem as אבינו, "our Father," and for waking up, we say מלכנו, "Our King". What is the significance of this? It is because the nights represent difficult times, and in those times, Hashem cares for us like a father cares for his children. The mornings represent happier times, when Hashem's chesed is clearly felt, as it states (Tehillim 92:3) לְהַגִּיד בְּבֹקֶר חֶסֶדְךָ, "To tell in the morning Your kindness." At those times, Hashem is close to us, like a king who is close to his people, but not on the intimate level of a father and child.

We find this difference in the brachos that we say after kriyas Shema in the morning and in the evening. In the morning, the Jewish nation is referred to as ידידים, keviyachol, friends of Hashem. As we say, וידידים העברת... ונתנו ידידים וזמירות, "The *friends* you let pass.... The *friends* offered music, songs, and praises."

In the evenings, we are called בנים, as we say in this brachah, המעביר, בניו בין גזרי ים סוף... וראו בניו גבורתו, "He carried his *children* between the split Yam Suf.... His *children* saw His strength."

A ידיד is a good friend, you greet him with a happy countenance when you say Gut Shabbos or when you greet him in the morning, but it doesn't compare to the love one has for his own children. The brachah at night, which represents more challenging times, discusses the higher form of love, because when people go through hard times, that is when they merit Hashem's utmost love.

Also, Klal Yisrael are called בנים, children, twice in the Torah. Once is (Shemos 4:22) וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל פַּרְעֹה כֹּה אָמַר ה' בְּנִי בְּכֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל, "You shall say to Pharaoh, 'So said Hashem, "My firstborn son is Yisrael." Another time is (Devarim 14:1) בְּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לֹא תַתְּגַדְּדוּ וְלֹא תַשִּׁימוּ קֶרֶחַח בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם לָמֹת, You are children of Hashem, your G-d. You shall neither cut yourselves nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." This is because both pasukim speak about the Jewish nation

It states (28:11) וַיִּפְנֶה בְּמָקוֹם וַיָּלֶן, "He arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:10) says that בְּמָקוֹם הַשְּׁמֶשׁ should be translated as בְּיָבֵהּ הַשְּׁמֶשׁ, the sun was extinguished. This is because the sun set before its time, and it was like Hashem extinguished the light of the sun. The Midrash says, "It is like

when a king's friend comes to visit the king. The king says, 'Turn off the lights. I want to speak with him in privacy.' Similarly, Hashem turned off the lights to speak with Yaakov privately."

Let's learn from this that when there are difficult, dark times for Bnei Yisrael, it is a time of love. Hashem is calling us; He wants to speak to us privately.⁴

when they are at a low level. The first pasuk discusses the time the Yidden were suffering in Mitzrayim. The second pasuk refers to a person experiencing the loss of a relative, r'l. Specifically at these hard times, Hashem calls us בָּנִים, children. These are the times that Hashem's love for us is at its peak.

4. It states (31:46) וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְאֶחָיו לְקֹטֹף אֲבָנִים וַיִּקְחוּ אֲבָנִים, "Yaakov said to his brothers, "Collect stones," and they took stones..." Notice that Yaakov asked them לְקֹטֹף אֲבָנִים, to *collect* stones. However, וַיִּקְחוּ אֲבָנִים, his sons *took* stones. Rebbe Aharon of Belz zt'l asks why the words are changed, from לְקֹטֹף to וַיִּקְחוּ?

I heard from a gadol that אֲבָנִים, stones, represent tzaros. (As in the pasuk 29:2, וְהָאֶבֶן גְּדֹלָה עַל פִּי הַבְּאֵר, a huge rock was upon the mouth of the well," and the miforshim say that this hints to the tzaros Yidden suffer in galus.) Yaakov Avinu knew that all tzaros have a purpose and that something good will come from them. This is why he said לְקֹטֹף אֲבָנִים, collect stones. People collect precious items, and Yaakov instructed them to collect their tzaros. He should feel that each tzarah is like a precious gem. But this is a very high level, and not everyone understands this. For them, it was וַיִּקְחוּ אֲבָנִים, taking the stones, just for the sake of removing them. They didn't cherish the benefits of

Rebbe Leibele Eiger zt'l explains that *בִּי בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ*, the sun setting, was a reminder for Yaakov Avinu that just as the sun sets and then the morning comes, so, too, Yaakov should know that all tzaros will end and good times will come. This was a great chizuk for Yaakov Avinu when he went to Charan, to the house of Lavan the rasha. He was taught that suffering has an end.

We quote from Rebbe Leibele Eiger's holy sefer, Toras Emes: "He knew that

all the darkness that he endures in Charan is only for a certain amount of time. The salvation is prepared and ready to come. Only for the time being, the salvation is concealed. It can be compared to when the sun sets. It looks like there isn't a sun in the world anymore, when in truth it just went away for a moment, and it is prepared to shine again when the morning comes. Similarly, Yaakov understood that the darkness is only for a short time, like the sun setting."⁵

the tzaros. Their focus was to remove them as quickly as possible.

This gadol (who told me the difference between *לְקַטּוֹ* to *וַיִּקְרָהוּ*) added that he heard from an elderly woman, a Holocaust survivor, who suffered a lot in her lifetime, during the Holocaust and afterwards, that it states in Tehillim (91:12) *עַל כַּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ פֶּן תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רִגְלֶךָ*, "On their hands they will bear you, lest your foot stumble on a stone." Metzudas Dovid explains, "The malachim will carry you on their palms of their hands; they won't let you walk on the ground, lest you stumble on a stone on the earth. This is describing, as a mashal, the great protection and hashgachah you will receive." She asked: Why didn't Dovid request that the stones shouldn't be there at all! The answer is that those stones are a great favor for us. We request that Hashem help us rise above them and keep us from stumbling over them.

5. Rebbe Leibele Eiger teaches that the final letters of (28:10) *וַיִּלֶךְ (וַיֵּצֵא)*

Reb Leibele Eiger adds that this is the specialty of tefillas Maariv. It is said when it is dark, but one shouldn't lose hope. The salvation is prepared, and it will come. It will become light again, just as the night turns into the morning.

Chazal (Brachos 4a) say, "Who is a ben Olam HaBa? Someone who connects גאולה

לתפילה at Maariv." As we explained, the tefillah of Maariv, at nighttime, hints to the person who feels that the "sun set early" for him, and he is going through difficult times. Nevertheless, he connects גאולה לתפילה. This means he believes that there will be a geulah, redemption. He is a בן עולם הבא. He merits Olam HaBa because he has this emunah.⁶

נַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע, "Yaakov left Be'er Sheva and went..." is gematria 292, the same as רפואה. The final word of the pasuk is חֶרֶן, "to Charan." חרנה or חרון represents anger (חרון אף), as this is written in Rashi and the Midrash. The Torah hints at "refuah" before the חרון, the anger and punishment. This means that when Yaakov left Be'er Sheva en route to Charan, he understood that the "refuah" would come before the "Charan", the suffering.

6. The Zohar HaKadosh (vo.2, 2b) elaborates that Yechezkel HaNavi saw a prophecy, specifically in Bavel, to offer chizuk to the Jewish nation. They shouldn't think that Hashem abandoned them when they were sent into exile. As it states (Yeshayah 43:14) לְמַעַנְכֶם שְׁלַחְתִּי "Because of you, I was sent to Bavel." This means that Hashem went to galus, along with the Jewish nation. The Beis Yisrael zt'l explains that Yaakov Avinu's dream served a similar purpose. Yaakov was leaving Eretz Yisrael and going to Charan, and Hashem wanted him to know that He will be there together with Yaakov Avinu.

וְהָיָה סֻלָּם מֵצֵב אֶרֶץ וְרָאשׁוֹ מִגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם (28:12), "A ladder set up on the ground and its top reached to heaven." The Baal HaTurim writes, "This is a hint that someone who was cast to the ground for a moment will be lifted up to heaven."

Everything from Above

The Baal HaTanya zt'l said to a student of the Magid of Mezritz zt'l, "I have an obligation to teach my son Torah, as it states (Devarim 6:7) וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ, and you have an obligation to bring parnassah home. Let's change places. You will teach Torah to my son [who later became renowned as Rebbe Dov Ber, the Mittele Rebbe zt'l], and I will take on your obligation, because I will pay to teach my son." The Baal HaTanya gave him an outline of what he should teach his son. He said, "The first thing is to teach the alef beis. Tell him about the first letter, the alef, א. Tell him how it appears: a dot above, a dot below, and the letter נ in between, connecting them..." (HaYom Yom 8th of Adar)

The vav represents emunah. The letter א tells us

that one must believe that everything that happens below is connected and decreed from Above. This includes even the most minor details of life (represented by the small dot at the bottom of the alef). Even these seemingly minor details were decreed from above.

When one believes that everything is from Hashem, he will have a wonderful life. It states (Tehillim 118:7) ה' לִי בְּעֵזְרִי וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְּשִׁנְאֵי. Rebbe Dovid'l of Tolna zt'l explained it, ה' לִי, the sensation that Hashem is with me all the time, בְּעֵזְרִי I wish that sensation for all my friends. However, the feeling of וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה, "I will see... I will do..." I wish this feeling בְּשִׁנְאֵי, for my enemies. The reason is that the more a person knows that ה' לִי, Hashem is helping him, the more success he will have in life.⁷

7. A good Yid from Yerushalayim wanted to be machmir with the halachos of Shabbos, so he installed a Shabbos electric generator on the roof of his building. A neighbor of the building was jealous of him and slandered him to the authorities. He went to the tax

It states (Tehillim 92:10) כִּי הִנֵּה אֹיְבֶיךָ ה' כִּי הִנֵּה אֹיְבֶיךָ יֵאָבְדוּ.⁸ The Baal Shem Tov zt'l explained that when a person knows that כִּי הִנֵּה אֹיְבֶיךָ ה', that his enemies were sent to him from Hashem, כִּי הִנֵּה אֹיְבֶיךָ יֵאָבְדוּ,

the enemies will disappear. The same applies to all troubles a person experiences. When he believes that everything is arranged from Above, the troubles will disappear.⁹

authorities and tipped them off that this neighbor engages in tax evasion. His proof was that this neighbor traveled a lot to America and to other countries. That means that he must be an international businessman, and he doesn't report his earnings to the government. (In reality, he was a fundraiser for a kollel, and he travelled often for that purpose.)

The authorities arrived at the neighbor's home to investigate. Of course, they found nothing at all. But one thing they did discover. The wife's name was מאשה, and not משה, as they had initially written in their books. Until now, they thought מאשה was a man; now they discovered that she is a woman. In Eretz Yisrael, men pay more taxes than women do, so this correction saved them money.

The man who spoke against them to the police thought he was harming them, but he was actually helping them. Their taxes will now be less, and they were also refunded for all the years they were overcharged. The lesson is that everything is from Hashem, and even those matters that seem to be bad, at first, are for our good.

8. Literally, the translation is, "For behold Your enemies, Hashem, for behold Your enemies will perish."

9. It states (Tehillim 125:2) יְרוּשָׁלַם הָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ וְה' סָבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם "Yerushalayim has mountains surrounding it, and Hashem surrounds His people from now and to eternity." Reb Shmuel Wosner zt'l explains that at nighttime, people don't see the mountains surrounding Yerushalayim. In the morning, they see

Lavan said to Yaakov (31:29) *יֵשׁ לֵאֱלֹהֵי יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע* "I have the power to inflict harm upon you..." He believed that he had the power to do as he wanted. There was only one problem, as he said to Yaakov, *וְאֵלֶיךָ אָמַשׁ אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי אֲמֹר הַשְׁמֹר לְךָ מִדְּבַר עִם יַעֲקֹב מְטוֹב עַד רָע* "The G-d of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Beware of speaking with Yaakov either good or bad.'"

It seems that he contradicted himself with his words. Why did he say *יֵשׁ לֵאֱלֹהֵי יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע* "I have the power to inflict harm upon you..." Didn't he just see that he can't do anything without Hashem?

Also, in the Haggadah Shel Pesach, we say *בְּקֶשׁ לַעֲקוֹר* *אֶת הַכֹּל*, that Lavan wanted to uproot and destroy Yaakov, and his entire family. He had this plan when he came

to Yaakov and his family the morning after he had his dream. Why was he still planning to destroy Yaakov? Why did he still think *יֵשׁ לֵאֱלֹהֵי יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע* "I have the power to inflict harm upon you..."? Didn't he see that he can't do anything without Hashem's decree and permission?

Apparently, he thought that it was a coincidence that he had this dream and this warning from Hashem on the night before he was going to harm Yaakov. Lavan thought, "If I had had this dream a night later, I wouldn't have this problem. I would be able to do whatever I want." Because he still believed he had the power to do whatever he wanted, just this time, Hashem stopped him. He didn't realize that this hashgachah pratis meant

the mountains. The mountains were there all the time, only now they are seen. The same is *וְהָיָה סָבִיב לְעַמּוֹ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם* "Hashem is around His people from now and to eternity." Hashem is always with us, even when we don't clearly see Him.

that he is *always* under Hashem's control, and he has no strength at all.

Lavan never had such a dream before, Hashem never came to speak with him before, and he had the dream on a crucial night. But he didn't put two and two together. He failed to realize that he had no power at all, and he can't do anything without Hashem.

We must be cautious not to be like Lavan. Many times, we are shown that

Hashem is in control of our lives, and then we forget, and we think *נַשְׁ לַאֲל יָדֵינוּ*, that we have the ability to do things on our own.

The Yahrzeit of the Bas Ayin

(Rebbe Avraham Dov ben Rebbe
Dovid zy'a)

Chazal say (Chulin 7:) "Tzaddikim are greater after their passing than when they were alive." This is particularly so on their yahrtzeit¹⁰ because that is

10. We must know and believe with emunah sheleimah that every year, on the yahrtzeit, the tzaddik rises to even higher levels in heaven. This means that the salvations that will come this year, on the 12th of Kislev, on the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, will be greater in quality and quantity than ever before.

The Gemara (Brachos 34:) states, "Whoever is greater, must humble himself more." (The Gemara explains that most people bow down four times in Shemonah Esrei (twice by the first brachah and twice by Modim), but the kohen gadol bowed at the end of each brachah of Shemonah Esrei, and a king bows down at the beginning and end of each brachah of Shemonah Esrei. The greater the person, the more he must humble himself. The Noam Eliezer of Skulen zt'l said, quoting the holy Ruzhiner zt'l, that on the day of a yahrtzeit, when a tzaddik rises to a higher level, he has become greater. Therefore, he needs to increase his humility. This means that he must lower himself and come down to this world, more than ever before, to help the people living here and help them be zoche to the salvations they need.

when their holy *ruach* (spirit) hovers and rests on their grave to bring salvations to those who daven there and seek Hashem's compassion. The Yismach Yisrael (Me'oron shel Yisrael 14 Shevat 2) says that a yahrtzeit is called הלולא because, in Aramaic, a chasunah is also called *hilulah*. The celebration of a yahrtzeit is compared to the

joy of a chasunah. And just like at a chasunah, the *kesubah* is read before the *chosson* to remind him of his obligations to the *kallah*, so too, on the day of the *hilulah* of a *tzaddik*, the *tzaddik* is reminded of his obligations to the people who are החוסים בעלו reside under his shade (which means those who are students of this great *tzaddik*).¹¹ And this

11. Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l explained that when a *tzaddik* goes to heaven, looks down, and sees the suffering in this world, he understands very clearly how everything we go through is all for our benefit. From his viewpoint in heaven, he sees everything in a positive light. As is told about the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk zt'l. He promised his student, Rebbe Mendel of Riminov zt'l, that when he is niftar, he will annul a particular decree that was then decreed on the Jews. Time passed, and Rebbe Elimelech came in a dream to Rebbe Mendel of Riminov and said, "Now that I am in heaven, I don't see that the decree is bad anymore. Every decree is good. So how can I annul it?" But on the yahrtzeit, the *tzaddik* comes down to this world, and then he sees and perceives the great tzaros we endure in the way *we* experience them. When this occurs, he is motivated to act to annul all the harsh decrees and to daven for salvations for Bnei Yisrael. This is why the yahrtzeit is called *hilulah*, an expression of joy. There is a lot of joy and salvations on this day because the *tzaddik* understands our tzaros and prays for our salvation.

The Sifri (Eikev 38) teaches, "Tzaddikim bring blessing wherever they go. When Yaakov came to Lavan, he brought blessings... When Yosef came to Potiphar, he brought blessings... Yaakov came to Pharaoh and brought blessings, ending the famine before its time."

doesn't only mean those who were the tzaddik's students when he was alive; it includes those who try to go in this tzaddik's ways and learn from his divrei Torah after his passing. If someone living in our times in the year, תשפ"ה, desires to learn from the ways of the tzaddik and wants to study his divrei Torah, he can be called החוסים בצלו, 'under the

shade', and a student of this great tzaddik. On the day of the *hilulah*, when the tzaddik is reminded of his obligations to help those who are under his shade (החוסים בצילו), this certainly also includes the new students, who didn't know the tzaddik. Perhaps they didn't even see the tzaddik when he was alive, but they seek to learn from him¹² and become influenced

The Sifri then discusses whether a salvation from a tzaddik is eternal. The Sifri writes, "After Yaakov was niftar... the hunger returned. Reb Shimon Bar Yochai said, 'This isn't a kiddush Hashem. The words of tzaddikim exist when they are alive and don't cease after they are niftar. The bounty that comes from a tzaddik is eternal, forever.'" Based on the above, we can be certain that the tzaddikim continue to perform miracles after their passing, as in during their lifetime. Many brachos come to the Jewish nation in the merit of tzaddikim.

ישראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים, "Yisrael receives their salvations from Hashem, an eternal salvation." The roshei teivos spell בת עין. This is a hint that salvations will come to the Jewish nation on the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit. Also (Tehillim 34:3) states, בה' תתהלל נפשי ישמעו עמים, "My soul boasts of Hashem; may the humble hear and rejoice." The roshei teivos spell בת עין.

12. The translation of *hilulah* is *chasunah*. At a *chasunah*, the custom is to give gifts. At the *hilulah/chasunah*, Hashem gives a gift to the tzaddik, which is that Hashem enables the tzaddik to provide goodness to Bnei Yisrael. Obviously, those who are closer to the tzaddik will be from the first to receive the brachos. Therefore, everyone should try to connect to this great tzaddik,

by his ways and from his divrei Torah.¹³

either by making a seudah, a l'chayim, or by coming to the kever, each person in his own way. And most important is to learn from this tzaddik's ways and to serve Hashem accordingly. Those who do so will be first in line to receive the yeshuos that the tzaddik brings forth on this day.

The Beis Avraham (Noach) teaches, "On the yahrtzeit of tzaddikim, even if you didn't know them in your lifetime, and you never heard divrei Torah from their mouths, nevertheless, those who go in their ways and get together, tell holy stories, review their lessons, and learn how to serve Hashem, through these means they attain a connection with these tzaddikim.

When the Bas Ayin left Avritz to travel to Eretz Yisrael, many of his chassidim accompanied him to the port of Odessa. The Rebbe was already on the ship, and his chassidim asked him, "How can we maintain our connection with you?"

The Bas Ayin replied that Chazal tell us that we connect with Hashem when we practice Hashem's attributes. "Just as Hashem is compassionate, so shall you be compassionate..." "Similarly," the Bas Ayin said, "if you emulate the *middos* I labored over and have trained myself in since my youth, we will remain connected. Even when we are miles apart, we will be connected as though we are face-to-face. I have three primary *middos* that I trained myself to be cautious with since my youth. They are never to speak *lashon hara*, never to tell a lie, and to be distant from *gaavah*. If you also take on yourselves these three attributes, we will remain united."

Indeed, these three *middos* are primary themes in his holy *sefer Bas Ayin*.

(The Bas Ayin is buried in a cave. To get to his *kever*, one needs to bend down low. Tzaddikim said that this exemplifies the Bas Ayin's humility. Even to get to his grave, one must lower himself.)

13. We will discuss some of the salvations and deeds of chesed that the Bas Ayin performed in his lifetime:

A catastrophic earthquake shook Tzefas and Teveria on the 24th of Teves, 5597/1836. The houses in Tzefas were built on a slope, one next to the other, and their foundations were weak. When the earthquake hit, the foundations collapsed, and the houses fell.

About two thousand Yidden were *niftar*, and many more were wounded r"l.

The Bas Ayin was in his *beis medresh* davening Minchah when the earthquake began, and the walls shook. Some people wanted to rush out of the *beis medresh*, but the Bas Ayin instructed everyone to gather around him, and he fell to the ground and davened. Most of the domed roof collapsed, and the four walls fell, but the people around the Bas Ayin were saved. In that spot of the *beis medresh*, the ceiling remained intact.

(Today, visitors to the Bas Ayin's *beis medresh* can notice that the ceiling has two levels. This is because half of the roof collapsed and needed to be rebuilt. The following words are engraved on a plaque in the *beis medresh*, "How holy is this place! The *beis medresh* of Reb Avraham Dov, the Rebbe of Avritz zt'l, who witnessed the great earthquake in Tzfas, 5597. In his great merit, half of the *beis medresh* remained intact, and the Rebbe and his students survived.)

The Bas Ayin explained why he prayed while lying on the ground: "I saw that the stones were falling sideways, not downwards. It was like one wall was throwing stones at the opposite wall. I understood that this meant the *samech mem* (the Satan) was executing this disaster. When this occurs, the only protection is complete humility. That's why I fell to the ground."

When they left the *beis medresh*, the Bas Ayin, his chassidim, and other survivors tried to rescue as many people as possible from under the rubble of the many collapsed homes. It was raining and cold, but they had to save lives, and there were *niftarim* who needed to be extricated and brought to rest.

After things calmed down a drop, the question was where to go. Most of the homes were destroyed, and rebuilding them would be very costly. Many rabbanim decided it was time to leave Tzefas and move to Yerushalayim. Most of the Prushim communities did so. However, the Bas Ayin toiled and succeeded in re-establishing the Jewish community in Tzefas. He sent messengers to chutz

Reb Moshe Leib Heller zt'l was a chasid of the Bas Ayin. The last day of Reb Moshe Leib Heller's life was a Friday, and Shabbos was approaching. For a long time, he was a גוסס, on the verge of death. His brother, Reb Shmuel Heller (the Rav of Tzfas), was concerned that if his brother continued in this state into Shabbos, it would result in some *chillul* Shabbos, so he said to his brother, "It is already late. It's almost Shabbos." At that moment, Reb Moshe Leib rolled over to the other side

and returned his *neshamah* to his Creator, and he was buried just moments before Shabbos arrived.

On Motzei Shabbos, the niftar came to his brother, Reb Shmuel, and told him what occurred in his judgment. He said that since he was buried just moments before Shabbos arrived, the court of heaven didn't have enough time to check what his judgment would be. So, he had a very calm and good Shabbos (as it is known, even Gehinom isn't functioning on Shabbos).

la'aretz to raise funds. The city of Tzefas was rebuilt, this time on top of the mountain instead of on the slope, with space between each home.

In the year 5601, a plague broke out in Tzefas. The Bas Ayin fell ill and was sick for a few days. He requested that his student, Reb Shmuel Heller zt'l, visit him before his passing, as he wanted to share the secrets and profound lessons he had heard from his teachers. However, Reb Shmuel's family was afraid to allow Reb Shmuel to visit the Bas Ayin because the Bas Ayin was ill with the contagious plague. Reb Shmuel Heller always regretted having lost such an opportunity.

Before his passing, the Bas Ayin proclaimed, "I'm the last victim of this plague. After me, no one will die." And that is what happened. His passing brought atonement to the people of Tzefas, and the plague subsided.

When Shabbos passed, a *malach* came to him and said, "Come with me."

Reb Moshe Leib told him, "As long as I lived, I never did anything without asking my Rebbe for his counsel. I don't want to go with you before asking my Rebbe for his counsel."

The *malach* agreed to grant Reb Moshe Leib his request, and he brought him to the *heichal* (heavenly abode) of the Bas Ayin. Reb Moshe Leib entered, and the *malach* waited outside. The Bas Ayin asked him about his petirah, and Reb Moshe Leib told him that the *malach* was waiting outside. The Bas Ayin replied, "Who is this *malach*? You are here! Stay here!" And he did.

The lesson for us is that whoever merits coming to the *heichal* of the Bas Ayin, he can remain there. Fortunate are those who

merit to be "under his shade" (החוסים בצלו). He will receive all blessings, *b'ruchniyus* and *b'gashmius*, for his body and for his soul, for his entire life.

If you ask, how does one enter the *heichal* of the Bas Ayin and merit to reside in his shadow and draw handfuls of salvations? The first answer is to believe with emunah sheleimah in the greatness of this tzaddik. This is as the Chozeh of Lublin zt'l taught on the pasuk (Devarim 28:6) ברוך אתה בבואך וברוך אתה בצאתך, "You shall be blessed when you come, and you shall be blessed when you depart," that when one believes in the tzaddik when he comes to him, the tzaddik can bless him with salvation, and he is guaranteed that it will also be ברוך אתה בצאתך, that when he leaves, he will receive a yeshuah.¹⁴

14. Here is an example of yeshuos that come when one's emunah is perfect, which we heard from the baalei hamaaseh:

In Kislev, תשפ"ב, a family read in our *kuntreisim* about the great benefit of studying the holy sefer Bas Ayin, and that this study is *mesugal* for all types of yeshuos. This family had two older daughters who were anxiously waiting to find their bashert. The family decided that they would study Bas Ayin every Shabbos, and they hoped that in this merit, their daughters would get engaged.

This went on for about a year. One day, the older daughter told her mother that she wanted to take her out for the day. The purpose of the trip was to get a break from the heaviness they felt at home due to their circumstances – two older daughters, without a shidduch. The mother agreed and took a day off work, and took a bus up to Tzefas. When they arrived in Tzfas, they discovered that it was the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit. It was the 12th of Kislev! They hadn't realized that when they set out on their outing. Of course, they went to the Bas Ayin's kever to daven that there should be shidduchim in their family.

It wasn't easy to get to the kever of the Bas Ayin that year due to the heavy rains. But with siyata dishmaya and Hashem's wonders, they got to the kever around ten minutes before shekiyah. They poured out their hearts there and made a kabbalah that when they became engaged, they would return to praise Hashem for the miracle.

As soon as they left the cemetery, they waited for the bus to take them back home. While waiting for the bus, the father/husband called to tell them that someone had just called him with a shidduch offer. It took just a few days, and the shidduch was finalized. Needless to say, they continued studying the Bas Ayin. A few months later, the second daughter was engaged, as well.

Now, we come to the part of the story related to our subject. At the end of Av, they traveled to the kever of the Bas Ayin to praise Hashem for the miracles that occurred to them and davened there so that the next daughter in line should also find her bashert. They made a kabbalah that they would return during the week of the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit to praise Hashem when the salvation comes. And because they believed so much in the salvation, they added that if this daughter's chasunah will be scheduled for the week of the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, they would return some other time to the kever to praise Hashem for His salvation.

The Seudah

There is a renowned segulah to prepare a seudah in honor of the *baal hilulah*,

the Bas Ayin. In the merit of this meal comes wondrous *yeshuos*.

The Rebbe of Tosh zt'l (Avodas Avodah) said, "I know a

A shidduch offer came immediately, and the chasunah was scheduled for the 16th of Kislev. This story shows the strength of pure emunah. They were davening at the end of Av, and they already suspected that perhaps their daughter would be engaged and that the chasunah would be scheduled during the week of the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit! But they had already seen the miracles that this tzaddik performs, and they trusted in Hashem that the salvation would come quickly. They believed that it was feasible that the chasunah would be in Kislev, and so it was.

Now we will tell a story of the opposite extreme, to what occurs when there isn't emunah. Fifteen bachurim sat together and made a kabbalah that if they got engaged by the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, they would make a seudah in his tzaddik's honor. Indeed, fourteen of them became chassanim before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, תשפ"ב. One of the bachurim laughed at the idea; he didn't believe that this segulah (of making a kabbalah to make a seudah in honor of the bas Ayin) could bring yeshuos. Indeed, this bachur was the only one in the group who didn't get engaged. This bachur told us this story, and with tears, he begged that we write it to increase emunah among Yidden, so he should have a kaparah.

A story related to our topic occurred with the Bas Ayin himself. He went with a group of people to daven at kivrei tzaddikim in Tzfas. When they came to one of the kevarim, he heard one man say to his friend, "Who says that this tzaddik is actually buried here?"

The Bas Ayin turned to him and said, "Whoever doubts a mesorah accepted by Klal Yisrael is an apikores." We tell this story to remind all those who think they are wise and ask questions, 'Who said?' and the like, that this cools off the emunah.

family in Eretz Yisrael who needed a *yeshuah* and *rachamim*. They made a *seudah* in honor of the holy baal hilulah and were saved above the rules of nature.¹⁵

15. Some years ago, there was a Slonimer chassid in Tzefas named Reb Shlomo Gross z'l. He sold kerosene for his *parnassah* but barely eked out a living.

On the night of the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*, Reb Shlomo davened at the Bas Ayin's grave. That night, the Bas Ayin came to him in a dream and said, "I appreciate that you davened at my grave, but why didn't you make a *seudah* in my honor?"

In the morning, Reb Shlomo Gross gathered ten people, and they made a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. He couldn't afford to make the *seudah* alone, but he put out a white tablecloth, and each person brought something to the meal. At the *seudah*, they discussed *divrei Torah* and stories of the Bas Ayin.

After the *seudah*, Reb Shlomo bought a lottery ticket and won a huge sum of money. He donated a portion of it to the Slonimer Yeshiva and requested that the yeshivah use the funds to pay for an annual *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin.

Reb Shlomo Gross specified some conditions for the *seudah*: There should be a white tablecloth, *divrei Torah*, and stories of the Bas Ayin should be repeated, so the *seudah* would resemble the *seudah* he made on the day he had his salvation.

This tradition continues until today in the Slonimer Yeshivos and is still funded by a portion of the money Reb Shlomo Gross won on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*.

Thousands of people had their *yeshuah* because they made a *seudah* in the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. We will bring just a few:

On the 12th of Kislev, a few years ago, a tragedy occurred in Jersey City, New Jersey, when murderers entered a Jewish supermarket with weapons. There were casualties, r'l. We received a letter from one of the people who was saved:

Y. B. Goldberger writes that he owns a travel agency, which he runs together with his brother, who lives in Union City, New Jersey. One day, he met one of his clients in Jersey City. The plan was that after the meeting, his brother would drive in from Union City to Jersey City, and they would meet in the grocery to discuss some business matters. But that morning, his brother called him, saying, "We are having a seudah here [in Union City] in honor of the Bas Ayin. Perhaps you can come here, and we will discuss business here?" That arrangement saved them because it kept them away from the site of the attack.

A similar story occurred with a chashuver yungerman who lives in Jersey City. He planned to go to the grocery that morning, immediately after shacharis, but when he saw that there was a l'chayim in the beis medresh, in honor of the Bas Ayin, he decided to stay, and they spoke about the baal hilulah. That is when the shooting began. The seudah, in honor of the Bas Ayin, saved him.

An older bachur (his younger sister had already skipped him and gotten married) used to go to a cheder occasionally to work as a substitute. (He was the only bachur left from his class, so he sometimes left yeshiva to work in the cheder.) One year, on the 12th of Kislev, he was subbing at the Sadigura cheder in Bnei Brak, and during recess, there was a seudah in the rebbes' room. The bachur was inspired at the meal, and he announced so everyone could hear, "I accept on myself that if I find my shidduch before the 12th of Kislev next year, תשפ"ד, I will bli neder sponsor a seudah next year."

The melamdim told him, "Why don't you request to be married by next year, the 12th of Kislev? Why do you limit it to only getting engaged by next year?"

The bachur corrected himself and said that if he is married by next year's yahrtzeit, he would pay for the meal. Soon after this kabbalah, he forgot about the whole matter. He became a chasan in Iyar, and they began looking for a date for the chasunah. From heaven, it was arranged that the chasunah should be scheduled for Thursday, the 11th of Kislev. The chasan took out his notepad to mark down the day of the chasunah, and he found in his notebook what he had written months before – that if he gets married before the 12th of Kislev, he will sponsor a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit.

We heard the following story from the baalei maaseh, who lives in Tzefas with many children. Every year, their home seemed to become smaller and smaller. For a long time, they searched for an apartment that would be roomier for them. They toured many for-sale homes, but for one reason or another, they never found what they sought. As the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit was approaching, in the year תשפ"ב, they read in these *kuntressim* about the segulah of making a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin. The family made a kabbalah, bli neder, that if they find a home before next year's yahrtzeit, they will sponsor a yahrtzeit seudah in the Bas Ayin's honor. Baruch Hashem, during aseres yemei teshuvah, they found a suitable apartment, and the price was reasonable. Only, they would first have to sell their old home, so they can have funds to buy the new apartment, and they were having a hard time selling their old apartment.

At the beginning of Kislev, the owners of the new apartment informed them that if they didn't come up with the money in a few days, they would sell their apartment to others.

On Friday, the 8th of Kislev, days before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, the family made another kabbalah. They promised that if they succeeded in selling their apartment in time to continue with the purchase of the apartment they wanted to buy, they would make another seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin the following year, on the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, תשפ"ד.

On Sunday, a Yid from Bnei Brak came to see their apartment, and he agreed to buy it! (It was truly hashgachah pratis that he came to see their home. He had come to Tzefas to meet with a specific real estate broker in Tzefas, but the broker wasn't feeling well that day and couldn't take him around. Someone else took him around, and he told him about this apartment. The other broker wouldn't have brought him there, but Hashem arranged it that their home should be sold in time.) The sales contract was finalized on the yahrtzeit, the 12th of Kislev!

It is worth noting that the baalas habayis told her neighbors and friends about the wonderful hashgachah pratis they experienced in the buying and selling of their apartment, and the miracles that occurred after they made a kabbalah to make a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin. Some of her friends also wanted to buy a new

home, so they also made a kabbalah to make a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin, and they also had their yeshuos.

I heard a story from a mashgiach of a renowned yeshivah in Eretz Yisrael. I know this person well. He came to Tzefas after Succos, in the year תשפ"ג, and went to kivrei tzaddikim. He came into the cave where the Bas Ayin is buried. When he was there, he remembered his nephew, a good bachur, who was already in shidduchim for many years... He hadn't planned to say it, but from heaven, the words came out of his mouth. He said that if the bachur becomes a chosson before the yahrtzeit, he will make a seudah on the yahrtzeit in honor of the Bas Ayin. After saying this, he realized how unlikely it was for this to occur. For years, this nephew was in shidduchim, without success. How could it be that in just six weeks, he would be engaged? But it occurred. Two weeks later, the bachur became a chosson. The kallah was very young; she had just turned seventeen. No one understood why the father rushed to make this shidduch. He had recently married off a daughter, and there was another kallah in the home. Why did he rush to get this daughter engaged, and why so young? But the answer is that the Bas Ayin was pushing things around in heaven so that this bachur would have his yeshuah.

I heard a similar story from a chosson who was already quite old. It was hard for him to find a shidduch (due to a specific problem). In the year תשפ"א, two weeks before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, he was at the Bas Ayin's kever, and he made a kabbalah that if he will be engaged before the yahrtzeit, he will return by the yahrtzeit to praise Hashem, and he will host a seudah. Ten days later, he became a chosson.

There is a benefit in this פרסומי ניסא, revealing the miracles that occurred and שיחו בכל נפלאותיו, to tell the wonders that Hashem performs because, in addition to the obligation to praise Hashem for all the kindness He gives us, there is also the benefit that others should learn of these miracles, and learn to do the same. Many of our *Acheinu Bnei Yisrael* need yeshuos, and when they hear of the miracles that occurred to these baalei maaseh, they will also want to do something similar, and they too will merit salvations, soon, and they will emerge from darkness to light.

An example of this is from the story we wrote above about a family in Tzfas who found an apartment and sold their old apartment after making kabbalos to make seudos in honor of the Bas Ayin. When this salvation occurred, the wife in this story told her mother about it. Her mother had older children in her home. She hadn't done a shidduch in ten years, and several children were waiting for their shidduch. She performed this segulah, and in one year, three of her children got married and established their homes.

We can also learn from these stories that the Bas Ayin is standing and praying for Bnei Yisrael to help them. And therefore, open your mouth wide and ask for great things. Don't be satisfied with small requests; you can ask for a lot, and Hashem will grant it to you, as it states (Tehillim 81:11) הִרְחֵב פִּיהוּ וּמְלֵאֵהוּ, "open your mouth wide [to ask for a lot], and I shall fill it."

A *yungerman* was walking around Meah Shearim (where there are many second-hand stores), looking for a store that sells second-hand washing machines.

As he went from store to store, he met up with Reb Motel Rothman Shlita. The *yungerman* expressed his financial hardships to Reb Motel, and he told him about his washing machine that broke, and that he couldn't afford a new one.

Reb Motel tried to convince him not to buy a second-hand machine because you never know what problems will suddenly come up. But the *yungerman* insisted that he couldn't afford a new machine. His only option was to buy a used machine.

Reb Mottel Rothman told him, "Today is the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. Many miracles happen through the *tefillos* said at his grave. Let's go there, and *b'ezras Hashem*, you will have a *yeshuah*."

Throughout the trip, this *yungerman* had one thing in mind: washing machines. He was debating whether he should buy a new machine or a used one, and if he bought a new one, he contemplated where he could get the money, which size and brand to buy, and so on.

Finally, they arrived at the *tzion*, and each person there prayed and expressed their personal needs, aspirations, and desires. They

It is well known that lighting a candle *li'iluy nishmas* the *tzaddik* is a great favor and *segulah* and benefit for the *neshamah* and for the person who lights the candle. It states (Tehillim 119:105) *נר לרגלי דברך*, and we understand that the primary *נר*, candle, is *דברך*, when one studies his *divrei Torah*, which is *אור לנתיבותי*, sheds light on one's path.

Reb Chaim Kanievsky *zt'l* said in the name of his father, the Steipler, that

when he was young, his father, Reb Chaim Peretz, would wake him early every morning to learn with him *Bas Ayin*, to teach him *mussar* and *yiras Shamayim*.

I heard a clever idea from a respected person. In the middle of the year (not exclusively on the 12th of Kislev), when one encounters *nisyonos* with guarding his eyes, and he fights his *yetzer hara*, closes his eyes and avoids seeing what he shouldn't, he can make a

davened that Hashem grant them salvations in the merit of the holy *tzaddik*, the *Bas Ayin*.

Then they went to Meron and davened at Reb Shimon bar Yochai's *kever*. It was then time for the celebration. They went to the supermarket in Meron to buy food for the *yahrtzeit seudah*, which they planned to conduct in Meron.

As they left the supermarket, the *yungerman's* cell phone rang. A while back, he had given *tzedakah* to an organization, and was entered into a raffle. They called to inform him he had just won a brand new washing machine!

Reb Motel Rothman says he also had a *yeshuah* on that day – a far greater one. Because he davened for more important matters than a washing machine. The lesson is: When the gates of heaven are open, and we can ask for whatever we want, we should be wise and ask for great things. We shouldn't limit ourselves. There's no limit to how much Hashem can give us.

Bas Ayin seudah (to celebrate that he guarded his *בת עין*, the pupil of his eye). He can make a seudah with music, drums, and dancing, and be happy that he succeeded in overcoming the yetzer hara, and he can praise Hashem. Such a seudah is certainly also mesugal for *yeshuos*

b'ruchniyus and *b'gashmiyus*, miracles beyond the rules of nature.

In the Bas Ayin's merit, may all of Klal Yisrael merit all types of salvations, *b'gashmiyos* and *b'ruchniyos*, with the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.