

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Vayitzei



בס"ד

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Torah Wellsprings

Vayetzei

Tips for the Jewish Home

On the Shabbos of Parashas Vayetzei, Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz zy'a informed his chasidim, "This Shabbos, I will not teach you Torah. I know that you are waiting to hear about shalom bayis, chinuch, how to earn parnassah as a Yid, and so much more, but this week, I don't have to teach you because whatever you need to know, you can find in the parashah."

Those weren't his exact words, but this was his intention. He wouldn't teach Torah on Shabbos Parashas Vayetzei because any lesson his chassidim needed to hear would be found in the parashah.

Therefore, we begin this week with practical ideas gleaned from the parashah that each person can utilize in his home.

Chinuch

(31:46) ויאמר יעקב לאחיו לקטו אבנים, "And Yaakov said to his brothers, 'Gather stones.'"¹ Who were Yaakov's brothers? Rashi writes that they were Yaakov Avinu's sons. "They were comparable to Yaakov's brothers because they helped him during times of sorrow and war."

The Chida (*Bris Shalom* 343) writes that there's a lesson in chinuch here: "Just as Yaakov Avinu considered his sons to be brothers, every father should view his older children – as though they

1. They gathered stones and built a monument of peace between Lavan and Yaakov.

were his brothers. When one does so, there will be peace and tranquility."²

The Chida explains that as children grow up, the parent/child relationship should become like the relationship of brothers. Although children must always honor their parents, they should develop a feeling of friendship and comradeship, almost like brothers.

The Chofetz Chaim's son, Reb Aryeh Leib zt'l, writes that it was very hard for him and his siblings to honor their father because the Chofetz Chaim treated them as brothers, with pleasantness, without strictness.

Siblings

We've discussed parent/child relationships, now let's move on and discuss the relationship between siblings, and we will see how much they should care for and help one another.

It states (29:25) ויהי בבקר והנה היא לאה, "It came to pass in the morning, and behold she was Leah!" Yaakov realized that he was tricked and that Lavan gave him Leah instead of Rachel. Rashi writes, "But at night [he didn't know that] she was Leah. Yaakov gave Rachel simanim, signs [so he would know it was her]. When Rachel saw her sister being led to the chuppah, she said, 'Now my sister will be ashamed.' She,

2. The Chida explains that a father shouldn't demand too much from his children. Shulchan Aruch (Yorah Deiah 240:19) states: "One is forbidden to be a burden on his sons and to be particular about how they honor him because this can lead them to sin [because if they don't honor him sufficiently, they have an aveirah]. Rather, he should forgive and turn his eyes the other way because when one forgives his honor, it is forgiven."

therefore, gave over the simanim to Leah."

This was a deed of self-sacrifice (mesirus nefesh), because Rachel knew that she might lose Yaakov as her husband. In the best scenario, she had brought a tzarah, another wife, into her home. But she was loyal to her sister, Leah.

Rachel is praised for this. Chazal tell us that Rachel was barren. If she had been married first, she wouldn't have had any children at all! It states (30:22) ויזכר אלקים את רחל, "Hashem remembered Rachel." The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 73:4) says, "What did Hashem remember? It was that she was silent for her sister's sake. When they gave Leah to Yaakov, Rachel knew, and she was silent."

Rashi writes, "Hashem remembered that she gave the simanim to her sister..."

It was to her benefit that Leah was married first. Otherwise, if Yaakov had

married Rachel right away, she wouldn't have given birth to any children at all.

Rachel didn't know this at the time. All she knew was that she had to help her sister so she wouldn't be humiliated.

When Leah was pregnant with her seventh child, she also demonstrated her love and devotion to her sister, Rachel. Rashi (30:21) writes, "Leah said, if the child [of my womb] will be a boy, my sister, Rachel, will have fewer children than the maidservants. [It was known to them that Yaakov would bear twelve sons. Leah had six sons, Bilhah and Zilpah had two each, so Yaakov had ten sons. If the child in Leah's womb was another boy, Rachel would only have one son and fewer children than the maidservants.] Leah prayed, and the child [in her womb] became a girl." The child was Dinah.

Both Rachel and Leah were moser nefesh to help

one another. Let us learn from this how devoted we should be to our brothers and sisters, to help them in any way we can.

The *Navi* tells us about the outstanding love between Dovid HaMelech and Yehonoson. (*Shmuel* 1, 18:1), ונפש יהונתן נקשרה בנפש , דוד , ויאהבו יהונתן כנפשו "Yonasan's soul had become attached to Dovid's soul, and Yonoson loved him as himself..." Yehonoson was Shaul HaMelech's son, and he knew that his friendship with Dovid HaMelech would mean forfeiting his own right to the throne. He said to Dovid (*I Shmuel* 23:17) ואתה תמלוך על ישראל ואנכי אהיה לך למשנה , "You will reign over Yisrael, and may I be to you as a viceroy." But he willingly gave up the throne because of his love for Dovid.

From where did Yehonoson learn to have this great level of love and devotion to a friend? The Rema MiPano *zy'a* says that he learned it from Rachel and Leah. He saw how these

two sisters were devoted to each other with self-sacrifice, and he learned to do the same.

When David was *maspid* Yohonoson, he said (*Shmuel* 2, 1:26) נפלאתה אהבתך לי מאהבת נשים , "Your love to me was greater than the love of women." The Rema MiPano explains this *passuk* to mean: נפלאתה , אהבתך לי , your wonderful love to me, from where did you learn it? מאהבת נשים , you learned it from the love of two sisters. You saw the love of Rachel and Leah, a love with *mesirus nefesh*, and from them you learned how one should truly love his fellow man.

Rachel and Leah are our role models of how siblings should love each other.

Shalom Bayis

In many relationships, there is a stronger figure and a weaker one. For example, parents and children, a teacher and a student, a boss with his workers, and often a

husband with his wife or visa-versa. The stronger figure might have the ability to enforce his way and opinion over the other, and the weaker party is forced to oblige, but as we will see, it isn't wise to do anything with force. Instead, the stronger one should convince the weaker party to see things as he does.

We learn this concept from this week's parashah.

Hashem told Yaakov Avinu that he must leave Lavan's house and return to Eretz Canaan, as it states (31:3), ויאמר ה' אל יעקב שוב אל ארץ, אבותיך ולמולדתך ואהיה עמך, "Hashem said to Yaakov, 'Return to the land of your forefathers and your birthplace, and I will be with you.'" Yaakov could have forced Rachel and Leah to return with him, or he could have simply told Rachel and Leah what Hashem said, and then for sure, they would have nothing to say. But in ten pesukim, Yaakov explained to Rachel and Leah that it was in their best

interest to leave their father's home. He told them that their father hates him and wants to harm him and that he has tricked him one hundred times. Then, when Yaakov told them what Hashem commanded him, they wholeheartedly left their father's home. They said (31:14, 15) העוד לנו חלק ונחלה בבית אבינו הלא נכריות נחשבנו לו כי מוכרו ויאכל גם אכול את כספנו "Do we still have a share or an inheritance in our father's house? Are we not considered by him as strangers, for he sold us and also consumed our money?"

Rashi explains that they said, "Even at a time when people usually give a dowry to their daughters, viz. at the time of marriage, he behaved toward us as [one behaves toward] strangers, for he sold us to you (for you served him fourteen years for us, and he gave us to you only) as wages for labor... He also ate our money because he would withhold your wages." They agreed to

leave with Yaakov and go to Eretz Canaan.

The Shlah HaKadosh (Vayetzai 44) explains, "When one wants something from his family, it isn't proper to force them – even when he rules over them. Instead, he should persuade them – as best as he can – until they agree with him and want the same as he wants. It's better when they are encouraged to see things as he does rather than to force them to obey. See how many words Yaakov Avinu used to convince Rachel and Leah to agree to his request with a happy heart, even after HaKadosh Baruch Hu commanded him to do so.

Praising Hashem

The Maharam Shik zt'l has a beautiful explanation on the pasuk (29:35) ותהר עוד ותלד בן ותאמר הפעם אודה את ה' על כן ותלד בן ותאמר הפעם אודה את ה' על כן [Leah] "קראה שמו יהודה conceived again and she bore a son. She said, 'This time, I will thank Hashem! Therefore, she named him

Yehudah." יהודה means praise, and Leah named him that way to praise Hashem.

Rashi explains that Leah said, "Since I have taken more than my share, I must offer up thanks." Yaakov had four wives and was destined to bear twelve children- naturally, three sons for each wife. When Leah had a fourth son, she realized that Hashem gave her more than her portion, so she praised Hashem. She named her son Yehudah, which means praise.

The Maharam Shik says that we should read הפעם אודה את ה' as a question. Leah said, "הפעם אודה את ה' "Shall I praise Hashem only now? No, of course not! I must praise Hashem for this kindness all the time." We naturally praise Hashem when we receive Hashem's kindness and then forget about it. Leah didn't want to fall into that habit. She said, "Shall I praise Hashem just once and then forget about my good fortune? I have to remember this kindness

always." Therefore, she named her son Yehudah. Whenever she would say his name, she would remember to praise Hashem for the kindness she received.

The Jewish nation is called יהודים, named after shevet Yehudah. Also, in Yiddish, the word Yidden comes from the name יהודה. The Chiddushei Harim zt'l explains that it is because the foundation of a Jew is to continuously praise Hashem.

The letters of a dreidel spell נס גדול היה שם, "A great miracle happened there," but while the dreidel spins, the letters cannot be seen. This represents how we lose sight of all the miracles that happen to us. So many things happen in our lives like we are spinning round and round, unable to focus on the many miracles and kindness Hashem performs for us. But Hashem constantly performs miracles and grants us His kindness, and we strive to recognize them, remember them, and praise Hashem for them.

A Slonimer chasid experienced a great kindness from Hashem and couldn't stop talking about it. Whenever someone came to his house, he told them about the miracle that happened to him. This continued for days until his children said, "Father, it is enough already. For how times will you repeat this story?"

He replied, "I must always remember Hashem's kindness. The Or HaChaim writes that if one doesn't constantly remember Hashem's kindness, he is at risk of worshipping avodah zarah." He told them the following lesson from the Or HaChaim:

It states (Devarim 8:18-19) וזכרת את ה' אלקיך כי הוא נתן לך כח לעשות חיל... והיה אם שכח תשכח את ה' אלקיך והלכת אחרי אלהים אחרים, "Then you shall remember Hashem, your G-d, for it is He Who gives you strength to make wealth... And it shall be, if you forget Hashem, your G-d and go after the gods of

others, and worship them and prostrate yourself to them."

These pesukim discuss the importance of remembering Hashem's kindness.

The Or HaChaim HaKadosh explains, והיה אם שכח, If you forget Hashem's kindness to you, תשכח את ה', אלקיך, you will forget Hashem. ועבדתם, and then you will worship other gods. And not only in thought but also in actions, as it states והשתחוית להם, "you will bow down to them."

The Or HaChaim concludes, "We learn that remembering is a great gate to avodas Hashem, and when one doesn't remember, the Satan will push him down from level to level, lower and lower." The Slonimer chasid thus explained to his children that he is being cautious not to forget Hashem's kindness because remembering Hashem's kindness elevates a person to very high levels

and forgetting Hashem's kindness can cause one to fall drastically.

It states (30:23) ותהר ותלד בן, ותאמר אסף אלקים את הרפתי, "[Rachel] conceived and bore a son, and she said, "Hashem has taken away my shame."

How did the birth of Yosef HaTzaddik spare his mother, Rachel, from shame?

Rashi writes, כל זמן שאין לאשה בן, אין לה במי לתלות סרחונה, משיש לה בן תולה בו, מי שבר כלי זה, בנד, "As long as a woman has no child, she has no one to blame for her faults. As soon as she has a child, she blames him. 'Who broke this dish?' 'Your child!' 'Who ate these figs?' 'Your child!'"

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz zt'l asks: Rachel was barren for many years, and she finally has a child. Is that all she can think of, that she won't be embarrassed anymore when she breaks something or finishes the figs?

Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz answers that Rachel obviously praised Hashem for the enormous gift of bearing a child, one of the Shivtei Kah. Nevertheless, she didn't want to lose sight of the small benefits she received from Hashem with this birth. She wanted to remember even the slightest gift she received from this birth and thank Hashem for that too.

Chinuch: Not in Front of the Children

The Avnei Nezer zt'l uses Rashi's words (30:32, stated above) to teach us a lesson in chinuch:

A fundamental principle in chinuch is to remember that children are better off seeing their parents always agreeing with one another. It isn't good for them to see their parents arguing.³

We can find a hint to this idea in Rashi: מַי שֶׁבַר כְּלֵי זֶה, a husband asks his wife, "Who broke this vessel?" He is about to start an argument with his wife because he is upset that the vessel broke. But the children are present, and it isn't wise to fight in front of the children. The wife replies, בִּנְךָ, "Your son is here, be cautious. Let's leave this dispute for another time.

3. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 71.) says that according to one opinion, the parents of a בן סורר ומורה must have identical voices (something very rare. This is the reason the gemara says, according to this view, that there never was and there never will be a ben sorer u'moreh). If they don't have the same voice, the child doesn't become a ben sorer u'moreh. The Avnei Nezer explains that hinted here is that the parents must give over the same message to the child. They must have the same voice and principles and convey the same message. If they give over conflicting messages, the child cannot be punished for his bad actions because it wasn't his fault. How could he be expected to follow the right path when he received conflicting messages?

The husband asks, מִי אָכַל "Who ate the figs?" She sees a dispute on the horizon. She immediately cries out, בֵּןךָ, "Your son is present. Let's not discuss these matters now."

Avoiding Anger

It states (30:2) וַיְהִי אִף יַעֲקֹב וַיִּחַר אֵף יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל וַיֹּאמֶר, "Yaakov became angry with Rachel and said..." It is known that וַיֹּאמֶר indicates a gentle, calm way of speaking, while וַיִּדְבֵּר represents a harsher form of speech. Reb Mendel Riminover zt'l said that the pasuk here teaches us that Yaakov Avinu controlled his temper. He was angry with Rachel for what she said, but it wasn't detected in his speech. וַיֹּאמֶר, he controlled himself, and he spoke with her in a peaceful, kind manner.

One of the best ways to overcome anger is to withhold from responding until a later time.

Before Hashem created Chavah, He put Adam to

sleep, as it states (2:21) וַיִּפַּל ה' אֱלֹקִים תְּרִדְמָה עַל הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצַּלְעוֹתָיו, "Hashem caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept, and He took one of his ribs" and created Chavah.

Why did Chavah need to be created while Adam was asleep? Toldos Yitzchak (written by the Beis Yosef's grandfather) explains that this was to teach a lesson to people who tend to get angry: "When you have reason to be angry, make yourself tired and sleepy." By having Adam fall asleep, Hashem was telling all husbands and all those who become angry at times that instead of responding, they should become lethargic and sleepy and push off the anger for a later time.

A man was planning to build an addition to his house and spoke to the Slonimer Rebbe about his plans. The Rebbe advised him to make a kabbalah to never become angry in the newly built section. If someone wants to get angry,

he must first go to the older rooms of the apartment. The Rebbe also told him to put tzedakah pushkas in the new rooms with signs reminding everyone not to get angry. "If someone raises his voice in the new rooms, he should *punish* himself by giving five shekels to tzedakah."

The man followed the Rebbe's counsel and discovered that not only was there no anger in the new rooms, but the entire house became calmer and anger-free.

The Yismach Moshe zt'l said that when one is tempted to become angry, the anger can be either for a mitzvah or an aveirah, and either way, he should push it off for later. If the anger is an aveirah, he should certainly push off becoming angry now. And if it is a mitzvah, every mitzvah needs a hachanah, preparation. He must first prepare for the mitzvah. He can't become angry right away.

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz zt'l would sometimes open and close his tabak pushke (snuff box). He explained that when he had a reason to become angry, he put the anger into the box to decide later whether he should become angry.

If this snuff box is still around, it is an expensive collector's item. And even if it isn't around, the valuable lesson, which is the main part of the story, remains with us and is something we can practice. When you want to become angry, push it off for a later time. It is very likely that later you will decide that you don't need to say anything at all, or if you must say something, you will say it much more calmly.

People say, "Before you speak, you can control your words. After you speak, the words control you." Even if you regret what you said, the words are out there, and the consequences of what you said are no longer in your hands. So, be clever

and think well before you speak rashly.

The Tchebiner Rav zt'l said that every *sharfer trit*, harsh step [such as an outburst with anger] is eventually regretted. It is very true, as all of us have experienced. There's a way to do things, and anger isn't the proper approach.

The Frankfurter (Rebbe Yisrael of Stolin zt'l) said that a *segulah* to control one's anger is to fill one's mouth with water and to hold the water in his mouth. When some of the water eventually drips out, the anger has already subsided. In addition to being a *segulah*, you also get the benefit of pushing off anger for a few moments, which is a great benefit. It gives you a minute to calm down. It will be even better to push it off for a few hours or until the next day.

The Imrei Pinchas says there's a very simple solution to anger: to believe that everything is from Hashem. Why should you be angry if

this is what Hashem ordained?

However, when one is tested, the best counsel is to just push off the anger for a later time. When you are angry, you won't appreciate the concept that everything is *bashert*, for your good. Later, when you calm down and think about what occurred, you can strengthen yourself with the *emunah* that everything is from Hashem.

Yaakov Avinu said to the three shepherds who stood by the well (29:7) הן עוד היום גדול לא עת האסף המקנה השקו הצאן ולכו רעו, "The day is yet long; it is not the time to take in the livestock. Water the sheep and go pasture."

Rashi explains, "Since Yaakov saw them lying down, he thought that they wished to gather the livestock to return home and that they would no longer graze. So, he said to them, 'The day is yet long,' i.e., if you have been hired for the day, you have not

completed the day's work, and if the animals are yours, it is, nevertheless, not the time to take in the livestock."

The shepherds explained to Yaakov Avinu that they were waiting for the other shepherds to come to help roll off the stone from the opening of the well.

The Ponovitzer Rav zt'l asked, why did the shepherds answer Yaakov Avinu? They could have told him, "You just arrived, and you are already giving us advice? Who do you think you are?"

The Ponovitzer Rav explains that the answer is found three pesukim earlier where it states (29:4) ויאמר להם 'יעקב אחי מאין אתם ויאמרו מחרן אנחנו', "Yaakov said to them, 'My brothers, where are you from?' And they said, 'We are from Charan.'"

He greeted them by calling them אחי, my brothers, which made all the difference. When one speaks to his fellow man with

respect and friendship, they become responsive and willing to have a dialogue with you. One word made all the difference. This is another reason why it isn't good to speak with anger. You won't be able to make conversation that way, and there won't be any talk. Speaking with kindness accomplishes much more.

The Imrei Emes zt'l said to his son, the Pnei Menachem zt'l (when his son was a young child), "When you put up a ladder, the top of the ladder needs to be resting on a firm location, so the ladder doesn't fall. In Yaakov's dream, how did the ladder lean on heaven? It must be that the ladder was lighter than heaven. But how did the malachim go up and down the ladder if the ladder was so light? It must be that the malachim were even lighter than the ladder. We see that whatever is lighter is holier."

Being "light" means being kind and sweet, and patient. Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa

zt'l said, "A Yid must be sweet like honey and soft like butter." The Gemara (Taanis 20.) says, "One should always be soft like a reed and not hard like a cedar tree."

When there is no anger in the home, the Shechinah resides there, and the home becomes like a Beis HaMikdash. When Avraham Avinu left his home to go to the akeidah, he took his knife and a torch from his home, as it states (Bereishis 22:7) ויקח בידו את האש ואת המאכלת (22:7) ויקח בידו את האש ואת המאכלת, " [Avraham] took into his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went together."

The Makover Rebbe asks why did he bring fire from home? He could have made a fire at the place of the akeidah.

It is known that Sarah Imeinu's Shabbos lecht burnt all week long (see Rashi, Bereishis 24:67). We can therefore explain that Avraham lit his torch from those Shabbos candles. He

wanted the holy fire to be used for the akeidah.

We can add that the Shabbos lecht brings an aura of kedushah into the home. That holiness gives the family the courage and the ability to pass difficult tests (as Avraham Avinu took this fire and was moser nefesh with the akeidah). There are many means of bringing kedushah into the home; a home without anger tops that list. It brings the Shechinah into the house.

Bas Ayin

This week, on the 12th of Kislev, is the yahrtzeit of the renowned tzaddik, the Bas Ayin. His name was Reb Avraham Dov Auerbach ben Reb Dovid zt'l of Avritz, and later in his life, he moved to Tzefas, where he is buried.

The wisest of all men, Shlomo HaMelech, teaches (Mishlei 25:27), אכל דבש הרבה לא טוב, וחקר כבודם כבוד "Eating too much honey isn't good, but searching out the honor of

the righteous is honorable." The Meiri explains that honey is sweet, but too much will make you sick. When it comes to praising tzaddikim, though, there is no limit to how much you can discuss. The more you praise tzaddikim, the better because when people hear the praises of tzaddikim, they aspire to follow in their ways.

His Ways

The Bas Ayin arrived at the Chaifa port in Eretz Yisrael on Rosh Chodesh Elul and planned to leave for Yerushalayim immediately. However, the people of Tzefas wanted him to be with them, and the Bas Ayin agreed to stay until after Simchas Torah.

But then he changed his mind, and this is the reason why:

On Hoshanah Rabba, the Bas Ayin heard a woman tell her son, "Yerachmiel! Bring down the carpets from the roof. Tomorrow Yidden

will bench Geshem, and their *tefillos* will certainly be answered, and it will rain strongly. All the carpets will get wet."

This conversation persuaded the Bas Ayin to remain in Tzefas. He said he wanted to be among Yidden who believed in the power of *tefillah* with such certainty.

The Bas Ayin hardly ever attended *levayos* in Tzefas, but once, a *levayah* passed his home, and he walked with the *niftar* until the burial.

Everyone wondered why he did so. The *niftar* seemed to be a fine, regular Yid, but no one knew anything special about him.

The mystery was soon resolved.

In those days, the *niftar* was put into the Arizal's mikvah before the burial. When the *niftar* was brought to the mikvah, the *chevrah kadisha* noticed that the top of his legs were black, and

they asked the *almanah* about that because they needed to know how to prepare him for the burial, and this is the story she told:

When he was younger, working as a merchant in *chutz le'aretz*, he endured many difficult tests and was about to marry a non-Jewish woman. A barrel of hot coals was placed in the center of the wedding hall to heat the cold hall. During the

wedding celebrations, his heart filled with fear of heaven, and he jumped into the burning coals.

The non-Jews at the wedding saw this and concluded that the groom was insane. They shouted at him and threw him out of the hall. "That is how he saved himself from the *aveirah*; since then, his feet have been black from the burns."⁴

4. Someone brought his son to Rebbe Yissachar of Belz *zt'l* and sadly informed the rebbe that his son decided to marry a non-Jewish girl *r"l*.

The Rebbe turned to the *bachur* and told him, "I can't convince you not to marry that girl, but I have two requests: Wear a *talis kattan* to the wedding, and your father should attend the wedding."

The *bachur* was very happy with the Rebbe's counsel. His father wasn't planning on coming to the wedding, and now, with a minor sacrifice of wearing *tzitzis*, his father would be with him.

At the wedding, there was lots of drinking. The *chasan* became hot and opened his shirt. People saw his *tzitzis* and shouted, "He's still a Jew. He tricked the bride. She thinks he isn't practicing Judaism anymore."

They were ready to lynch him, but his father was there and managed to rescue his son and escape together from the hall. (Rebbe Yissachar Dov requested that the father be there so that he could save his son from the mob.)

The Bas Ayin said that he saw a column of fire in front of this man's coffin. Therefore, he joined the *levayah*. The Gemara (*Kesubos* 17.) says that this honor (that fire goes before the niftar) is given to only one or two people in each generation. The honor means that he is so holy that no one has the right to come too close to him. This man merited this distinction because of that outstanding deed of *mesirus nefesh*.

The Bas Ayin lived in Avritz at the time when the students of the Baal Shem Tov zt'l and the students of the Vilna Gaon zt'l began to move to Eretz Yisrael.

There wasn't much *parnassah* in Eretz Yisrael, and the Jewish communities of Europe would support their brothers who had the privilege to move to Eretz Yisrael.

The meshulachim who came to Europe to collect money were generally great *tzaddikim*, and they gathered money for their

brethren living in Eretz Yisrael.

A meshulach would come to Avritz, and the Bas Ayin was always happy to meet with him and hear about Eretz Yisrael. Once, the meshulach said, "What can I tell you? Even the stones of Eretz Yisrael are like diamonds!"

This statement inspired the Bas Ayin to move to Eretz Yisrael.

One day, he met the meshulach in Tzefas, and the meshulach asked the Bas Ayin, "Isn't it as I told you? Isn't Eretz Yisrael wonderful!"

The Bas Ayin replied, "It definitely is. Everything you said was exact, except I don't see the stones of Eretz Yisrael resembling diamonds."

The meshulach replied, "Those who have pure eyes see it."

The Bas Ayin secluded himself in a room for several

days and didn't let anyone in. He served Hashem there until he recognized that even the stones of Eretz Yisrael are diamonds. He came out and made a *seudah* for his chasidim to celebrate this achievement.

Anavah - Humility

When the Bas Ayin left Avritz to travel to Eretz Yisrael, many of his chasidim accompanied him to the port of Odessa. The Rebbe was already on the ship, and his chasidim 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. "As Hashem is compassionate, you shall be c o m p a s s i o n a t e ... " "Similarly," he said, "if you emulate the *middos* that I excel in and have trained myself in since my youth, we will be united. Even when we are miles apart, we

will be connected, as though we are standing face to face. I have three primary *middos* that I trained myself to be cautious in 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 *midos* - caution from forbidden speech, truth, and humility - are primary themes in the holy *sefer Bas Ayin*.

The Bas Ayin is buried in a cave. To come 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.

Deeds of Kindness

There was a tragic earthquake in 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

because of the earthquake, the weak foundations collapsed, and the houses fell.

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

The Bas Ayin was in his *beis medresh* davening Minchah when the earthquake began, and the walls started to shake. Some people wanted to rush out of the *beis medresh*, but the Bas Ayin instructed everyone to gather around him. Most of the dome roof collapsed, and the four walls fell, but around the Bas Ayin, the roof remained intact, and miraculously, they were all saved.

During the earthquake, the Bas Ayin threw himself to the ground and davened.⁵

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 total humility. That's why I fell to the ground."

The Bas Ayin, his chassidim, and all survivors of the earthquake sought to save as many people as possible from under the rubble. It was raining and

5. Today, visitors to the Bas Ayin's *beis medresh*, can notice that the ceiling has two levels. This is a reminder of the earthquake when half of the ceiling collapsed.

The following words were engraved on a plaque in the *beis medresh*, "How holy is this place! The *beis medresh* of Reb Avraham Dov, the Rebbe of Auvritz *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.

cold, but help was needed, and there were *niftarim* who needed to be extricated and brought to their burial.

Then the question was where to go. Most of the homes were destroyed, and to rebuild them would cost much money. Many rabbanim thought it was time to leave Tzefas and move to Yerushalayim. Most of the Prushim community did so.

However, the Bas Ayin toiled and succeeded in re-establishing the Jewish community in Tzefas. He sent people to chutz le'aretz to collect money. The city of Tzefas was rebuilt, this time on top of the mountain instead of on the slope, with space between each home.

Thus, the Bas Ayin saved and helped many people in his lifetime.

He did so once again at his *petirah*. It was 5601, and there was a plague in Tzefas. The Bas Ayin became ill and was sick for a few days. He

requested that his student, Reb Shmuel Heller *zt'l*, visit him before his demise, as he wanted to share the secrets and profound lessons he had heard from his teachers. However, Reb Shmuel Heller's family was too scared to allow Reb Shmuel to visit the Bas Ayin because the Bas Ayin was ill with the contagious plague.

Reb Shmuel Heller always regretted that he lost this 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.

One year before Pesach, the *gaba'im* wanted to paint the beis medresh. The Bas Ayin asked them to hold off. He explained that before Pesach, the husbands needed a place to escape. *Erev Pesach*, he explained, the homes are topsy-turvy and there can be friction at times. "Where will the husband go if the beis

medresh is locked due to renovations?"

He writes (*Chukas* ד"ה א"י זאת (חזקת), "I heard from the Berdichever Rav *zt'l*, who said in the name of the Magid of Mezritch that a *gezeirah shavah*, גזירה שווה, means that when your fellow man is suffering from something, you should feel his pain exactly as he feels it." גזירה, the *gezeiros* and hardships of your fellow man, שווה, you should feel them equally. The primary *gemilus chasadim*, kindness you can do for your fellow man, is to feel his pain as though it were your own. This is alluded to in the word אהר because א"ה - דל"ת means you should feel you are the אה, brother, דל"ת of the poor."

The rav of Tzefas, Reb Shmuel Heller *zt'l*, served as the city's doctor for his *parnassah*. But to be a doctor, he had to study medical books written in foreign languages. Once, during Shacharis, he saw the goyishe letters (of his medical

books) before his eyes. He realized that being a doctor was disturbing his *avodas Hashem*, and he decided to stop pursuing this field.

Someone became ill, and he went to Reb Shmuel Heller. Reb Shmuel told him that he wasn't a doctor anymore. The sick person went to the Bas Ayin, complaining that he didn't have anyone to go to because Reb Shmuel Heller didn't want to treat him anymore.

The Bas Ayin called for Reb Shmuel Heller, and he put his hand over his forehead. From then on, Reb Shmuel didn't see the goyishe letters, and he once again served as the doctor of Tzefas.

Tzaddikim are greater after their demise (*Chulin* 7). Therefore, the great tzaddikim, who brought salvation to people during their lifetime, continue to do so after their passing.

We've read some stories of the Bas Ayin's chesed. He

certainly continues helping the Jewish nation, now from heaven and from his holy grave, and especially on the *yahrtzeit*.

The Seudas Hilulah

Some years ago, there was a Slonimer chassid in Tzefas named Reb Shlomo Gross z'l. He sold kerosene for his *parnassah* but barely earned 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,⁶ but why didn't you make a *seudah* for me?"

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* on his own, 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 stipulated some conditions for the *seudah*- there should be a white tablecloth, *divrei Torah* and stories of the Bas Ayin, resembling 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 the money Reb Shlomo Gross earned on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*.

6. The *Zohar* states that tzaddikim have pleasure when people daven on their graves.

Many people make a *seudah* or a l'chayim in honor of the Bas Ayin, and there are many stories of salvations. Here are a few of them:

One of the *gedolei hador shlita* had a divorced daughter, and for a long time, they couldn't find a *shidduch* for her. On the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*, the *gadol* sent some of his students to Tzefas to daven at the Bas Ayin's *kever* and to make a *seudah* for the poor people of Tzefas. Two weeks later, his divorced daughter was engaged.

The following happened in תשע"ז in Eretz Yisrael.

The tax department audited someone and discovered that he was claiming personal expenses as business expenditures. As the investigation progressed, more evidence of tax evasion was revealed. He remembered the *segulah* of making a *seudah* in honor of the Bas Ayin, and 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 stopped the investigation and said, "This time, we will let it pass. But next time we come, make certain we don't find anything like this."

A *yungerman* from Williamsburg couldn't fall asleep at night, and he went to a doctor to get sleeping pills. But the doctor told him to take an EKG.

When the doctor saw the results, he asked, "When was the last time you visited your cardiologist?"

"About half a year ago. Why? Is something wrong?"

"Something is terribly wrong. Make an appointment as soon as possible."

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

The doctor said, "There is no time to wait. I will arrange the appointment for you..."

After a few clicks on the computer, he said, "You have an appointment for tomorrow morning."

The cardiologist examined him and saw that one of the primary arteries was almost entirely blocked. The doctor wanted to do the surgery that very day, but the man pleaded that there was something urgent to take care of. He explained, "My bank manager warned me that my account would be closed if I didn't deposit a large sum of money today." 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 said, "O.K., you can take care of the bank today. But tonight, at midnight, stop eating, and tomorrow we will do the procedure."

The *yungerman* immediately called a friend and asked him to lend him a lot of money. He told him about his financial emergency, and he told him about his operation.

He added, "I performed so many *segulos* for wealth, and it seems that none of them work."

His friend replied, "Certainly, the *segulos* helped you. Just think about the miracle that just happened to you now. You went to the doctor because you weren't sleeping well, which might have saved your life. Perhaps the *segulos* you perform are helping you in other ways instead of for *parnassah*."

The point was accepted.

His friend 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, "You just reminded me: This morning, in *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? Throughout the year, I borrow from one person 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 today?' Now it seems that he was speaking with *ruach hakodesh*. Perhaps my life was saved because of that *seudah*..."

That night, he made a *seudah* in honor of the *Bas Ayin*. The meal ended before midnight when he began his fast.

The surgery was successful.

In the year 5780, *bachurim* from the *Boyaner yeshiva* made a *kabbalah* that if thirty *bachurim* of the *yeshiva* become a *chasan* that year, they will make a *seudah* on the *yahrtzeit*.

That year, the *Bas Ayin's* *yahrtzeit* was on *Shabbos*. Sunday, before the *yahrtzeit*, there were 27 *chasanim*. Thursday night, the *bachurim* called me to tell me that the 30th *bachur* was getting engaged that night in *Beitar*. (They had to make quick arrangements to arrange a *seudah* on *Shabbos*. I asked them why they chose the number 30, and they themselves didn't know. But this is an example of the miracles that happen in the merit of the *Bas Ayin*.)

The following year, *bachurim* from *Ahavas Torah*, the *yeshiva* of *Reb Tzvi Meir Zilberberg Shlita*, made a *kabbalah* that if twenty *bachurim* become a *chasan*, they would make a *seudah* on the *yahrtzeit*. Twenty *bachurim* became a *chasan*, but one of the *bachurim* left the *yeshiva*. A

few days before the yahrtzeit, the 21st bachur became a chasan.

Here's another wonderful story: A bachur (a grandson from the Zvhil dynasty) learned with a man who was married twenty-four years without any children. The bachur decided that he would learn a piece of Bas Ayin every single day as a merit that his chavrusah bear a child. The segulah worked. His chavrusah told him that his wife was expecting.

We don't know exactly how these things work, but the following could be somewhat of an explanation:

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 85:) tells a story of someone who was blind. He went to the cave where Reb Chiyah is buried and said, "I study your breisyos!" He was implying that in this merit, he should have a refuah. Indeed, he had his salvation, and was able to see again.

The Ben Ish Chai explains what happened. Chazal tell

us that tzaddikim in heaven have immense pleasure when people study their divrei Torah. Rashi (Bechoros 31:) says that their pleasure is that they feel alive. When someone is studying their divrei Torah, the tzaddik feels like he is living again.

Now, Chazal tell us that the blind feel like they aren't alive. This student was saying to Reb Chiya, "I study your braysos, and I make you feel alive. Please reciprocate and make me feel alive, too. I can't see, and the blind are compared to the dead."

His request was accepted, and he saw again.

Chazal tell us that the poor and the childless are considered dead. If they study the divrei Torah of a tzaddik, they give the tzaddik life, so they deserve salvation to live again, with wealth and with children.

Year 5778, one of the members of our chaburah had an older single daughter

at home. She was actually a *very older daughter*. The father made a kabbalah at the *yahrtzeit* that he would study Bas Ayin every day. Two weeks later, she became a kallah. They made the chasunah just two months afterwards. Before the *yahrtzeit* (the beginning of Kislev), she already had a child, and the baby had a bris.

The Bas Ayin never had children; therefore, people consider his *kever* a place *mesugal* to bear children.

A couple was childless for many years, and after many medical tests, doctors told them that they couldn't bear a child.

The husband davened at the Bas Ayin's *kever* on the Bas Ayin's *yahrtzeit*. A year later, on the *yahrtzeit*, י"ב כסלו תשע"ט, they had a son.

A *yungerman* was walking around the streets of Meah Shearim (where there are many second-hand stores) to see if he

could find a store that sells used 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 the latest one, that his washing machine broke, and he can't afford to buy a new machine.

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 *be'ezras Hashem* you will have a *yeshuah*."

They traveled together. Throughout the trip, this *yungerman* had one thought

in mind: washing machines. He was considering whether he should buy a new machine or a used one, and if he buys a new machine, he contemplated where he could get the money and which size and brand to buy.

Finally, they arrived at the *tzion*, and each person prayed and expressed their personal needs, aspirations, and desires. They 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. Now it was time for the celebration. They went to the supermarket in Meron to buy food for the *yahrtzeit seudah*, which they planned to make in Meron.

As they left the supermarket, the *yungerman's* cell phone rang. A while back, he had given tzedakah for a Chinese auction. They called to tell him he had just won a 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. 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 can ask also for the small things, but we shouldn't limit ourselves. There's no limit to how much Hashem can give us.