Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Vayetzei

Bas Ayin



בס"ד

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Torah Wellsprings - Vayetzei - Bas Ayin

Pearls from the Bas Ayin

In honor of the holy yahrtzeit of the Bas Ayin zt'l (the 12th of Kislev, on Sunday), we quote here some of his lessons, which are printed in his sefer, "Bas Ayin". It is especially ideal to study these lessons on the yahrtzeit, or even better, at a seudah made in honor of the yahrtzeit. Sefer Chasidim (224) states, "Whoever repeats divrei Torah of tzaddikim, the tzaddikim will daven for them from Heaven, and they will plead in his favor."

חנוכה - ד"ה אִיתָא בַּגְּמָרָא (ספרי ריש פ׳ מטות)

The Gemara (*Sifri, Matos*) states, "All prophets prophesized with כה, 'Hashem said like this'. Moshe was greater because his prophecy was with כה and with זה הדבר, 'this is what Hashem said'."

We can ask that it should have stated only, "Moshe was greater because his prophecy was זה הדבר," which is greater than כה. [Why do Chazal add that Moshe also had nevuah with כה?]

We can answer with a *mussar* approach:

Nevuah comes from humility, because when one has genuine humility, the Creator rests His *Shechinah* on him. As the *pasuk* (*Yeshayah* 57:15) states, "I dwell with the humble," and this results in prophecy.

One acquires humility when he contemplates how all his spiritual perceptions weren't earned through his good deeds or because of his wisdom; rather, the Creator, in His kindness, bestowed these levels on him. This results in the dwelling of the *Shechinah* on him, which is *nevuah*.

This is what Yosef (*Bereishis* 41:16) said [to Pharoh, when Pharoh heard that Yosef can decipher dreams]: "בלעדי, it isn't me…" Onkelos translates: "It isn't my wisdom; it is from Hashem…"

Yosef was humble, and therefore the Shechinah rested on him, and he had *nevuah*.

כה represents humility, since יד כהה (stated in *Menachos* 37a) means the weaker arm. This is the realization that, by himself, he is unable to perform great or small deeds. Everything is bestowed on him by the Creator.

This is the meaning of "All prophets said their prophecy with כה"; this means their prophecy came from כה, from their humility.

They contemplated how all their spiritual heights and perceptions were from נוצר חסד.

Moshe added זה הדבר, "this very matter," humility (that brought on prophecy) is also from Hashem's kindness. [The other prophets were humble; they felt that they didn't have any spiritual accomplishments, but they thought that their humility was their own accomplishment. They thought that their nevuah, which comes from humility, was their success, because they recognized their low level. Moshe was greater, because he realized that his humility was also a gift from Heaven.]

Moshe would reflect on how his humility wasn't from his awareness; rather, it was given to him by Hashem's kindness.

In this way, Moshe was greater, because he had prophecy from כה, from the awareness that all of his levels came from Hashem, and he also attained prophecy from זה הדבר. [He had a higher form of humility, because he was also humble about his humility, knowing that it was from Hashem, and not attained by his own awareness.]

He thought about how all this wasn't his own accomplishment, but only Hashem's *chessed* to him.

This is related to Chanukah, which falls on כסלו. כ"ה means weak (as in יד כהה, the weak arm), and כסלו is *gematriya* בלעדי, which means to think [with humility], "It isn't my wisdom; it is from Hashem…"

[Everything I have is from Hashem's kindness], from His attribute נוצר חסד, which is the מקור החסד, the origin of *chessed*, since מקור is *gematriya* נוצר. [The attribute נוצר חסד is the awareness that we have absolutely nothing on our own, and everything we have, even humility, is all from Hashem.]

נוצר חסד is the eighth attribute [of the thirteen attributes of mercy], and Chanukah is eight days, to hint at this. Furthermore, חי"ת is *gematriya* נוצר חסד. Also, the first letters of נר חנוכה are *roshei teivos* for נוצר חסד.

And these letters, נ"ח, are also the *roshei teivos* of נפשנו חכתה לה׳, "our souls await Hashem" (*Tehillim* 33:20).

This means that [for all his needs], he waits solely for Hashem, the source of kindness, נוצר חסד, and he doesn't rely on his deeds.

May it be His will that we merit this. Amen. So shall be His will.

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חנוכה - ד"ה מקשין העולם

There is a popular question (see *Beis Yosef* O.C. 670): Why is Chanukah for eight days? The miracle was only for seven days! [There was enough oil for the first night, so the miracle was for seven days, not eight.]

It seems this can be answered, according to the Gemara (*Brachos* 38a), which states that one should say המוציא over bread, with a ה׳ at the beginning of the word, because by the way one recites his brachos we can discern whether he is a *talmid chacham*. [There is a principle that one should recite brachos and perform mitzvos in a manner that demonstrates that he knows Torah and halachah. There is a machlokes whether one may say המוציא with a ה׳, and the halachah is that it is permitted. We purposely say המוציא to show that we know the halachah.]

We can now explain [the reason Chanukah is for eight days]: Beis Hillel say that the candles of Chanukah should increase each day. [On the first day, we light one candle, on the second day two candles, on the third three candles, and so on. Beis Shamai teaches that the order should be the opposite. On the first night, one should light eight candles. On the second night, seven; on the third night, six, and so on.]

If Chanukah were seven days, then on the fourth night of Chanukah, one would light four candles (according to Beis Hillel) and also according to Beis Shamai (who say to light one candle less each night) one would light four candles. [By looking at those four candles] one wouldn't know whether the halachah is like Beis Hillel or like Beis Shamai. [He isn't showing in his mitzvah that he knows the halachah].

Therefore, Chazal said that Chanukah should be eight days, so it will be noticeable each day [of Chanukah], even on the fourth day, that the halachah is like Beis Hillel.

The Abudrham (quoted in *Ateres Zekeinim siman* 670) says that חנוכה is *roshei teivos* for ח׳ נרות והלכה כבית הלל, "eight candles, and the halachah is like Beis Hillel." This hints at our discussion. The reason Chanukah was established to be eight days, [and not seven days], is to make it evident that the halachah is like Beis Hillel.

(I remember this *dvar Torah* from my youth, and I don't remember whether I said it myself, or I heard it.)

We can also answer the question [why Chanukah is eight days] in the following way:

1The miracle of the oil was indeed only on the last seven days of Chanukah; nonetheless, they established that the first day should also be Chanukah because the miracle of the Chashmonaim's triumph in war was primarily on this day.

And if you ask, so why do we light oil on the first night? [If we're celebrating the victory and not the

miracle of the lights, why do we light a candle on this night?]

We can answer that it's because Yehudah shouted in the war מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם ה׳, "Who is like You, among the mighty, Hashem?" These words are *gematria* נר, candle. [The war is associated with candles.]

[Actually, מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם ה׳ is gematria six less than נר, but that isn't a problem, as the Bas Ayin writes]:

Although there is no ו׳ in the word כמכה, since מ׳ is pronounced with the vowel חולם, it can be considered as though there is a ו׳ [in the word].

We can also explain it in the following way: It seems that the seal of the *kohen gadol* was the letter ח׳. [Chazal tell us that the jug of oil they found was sealed with the *kohen gadol's* seal. That seal was probably the letter ח׳.]

Because this was [the *kohen gadol's*] superiority over the other *kohanim*, he wore eight garments [while the others wore only four]. (ח׳ is *gematriya* eight).

Furthermore, the letter ח׳ implies that the *kohen gadol* always practiced the thirteen attributes of mercy.

As Chazal (*Shabbos* 133b) say, "Emulate Hashem's *middos*: As Hashem is merciful [so shall you be merciful…"] The letter ח׳ (as written in the *sefer Torah*) is made from two letters, ו׳ and ז׳, and is *gematriya* thirteen.

The jug of oil was sealed with the *kohen gadol's* seal, with a ח׳, and therefore Chanukah was established for eight days.

It also seems to me the following:

The miracle occurred primarily because of Yehudah, who repeatedly said מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם ה׳, "Who is like You, among the mighty, Hashem?" This phrase is *roshei teivos* מכבי, which is *gematriya* חסד, kindness.

He would say these words to bestow kindness on the Jewish nation from the Source of kindness.

Now we can say that when we recite the *brachah* לְהַדְלִיק נֵר חֲנוכָה on the first night of Chanukah, it isn't for the miracle of the oil, because in truth, there was no miracle of the oil on the first night, since there was enough oil for the first night.

Rather, we light a candle on the first night because of the miracle that the mighty were handed over into the hands of the weak; many into the hands of few; the contaminated ones into the hands of the pure ones.

They established the first day of Chanukah [to be part of Chanukah] because of the miracle that happened on this day, that they won the war.

The reason we recite the *brachah* לְהַדְלִיק נֵר חֲנוכָה also on the first night is to indicate that the salvation came from נר, which is *gematriya* מי כמוך באלים ד׳.

[The word לְהַדְלִיק can mean to draw down. Therefore], the translation of לְהַדְלִיק נֵר is "to draw down נר," [gematria] מי כמוך באלים ה׳ [and the *roshei teivos* are] מכב"י, *gematriya* חסד, to draw חסד into the world. Amen. So shall be His will.

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פְּקוּדֵי - ד"ה אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר פֻּקַּד עַל פִּי מֹשֶׁה עֲבוֹדַת הַלְוִיִּם בְּיַד אִיתָמָר בֶּן אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן.

These are the accounts of the [money and valuables donated to the] Mishkan — the Mishkan of *Eidus* — which were counted by Moshe's decree, for the work of the Levites, under the management of Itamar the son of Aharon the *kohen*.

Rashi writes that Mishkan (משכן) is written twice in this *pasuk*, hinting at the two Batei Mikdash that were

destroyed and taken as a *mashkon* (משכון) collateral, due to the sins of the Jewish people.

This seems difficult, because it was the first and second Beis HaMikdash that were taken away, not the Mishkan.

Another question: Why weren't the valuables donated under Elazer's management counted? [Why were the donations under Isamar's management counted?]

We can explain that the *pasuk* is hinting at pathways in *avodas Hashem*.

We'll first explain the *Rashi* (38:22) on the *pasuk* ובצלאל... עשה את כל אשר צוה ה' את משה, "Betzalel did *everything* Hashem commanded Moshe." כל, "everything," seems extra, since the pasuk would be understood if it stated that "Betzalel built the Mishkan as Hashem commanded Moshe."

This is because Moshe told Betzalel to make the vessels first and then to build the Mishkan. Betzalel replied, "The way of the world is first to build a house, [then the furnishings], and then to place the furniture inside." Moshe told Betzalel, בצל א"ל היית, you were in Hashem's shadow. That is exactly what Hakadosh Baruch Hu told me."

Betzalel therefore built Ohel Mo'ed first, and then he made the utensils that go in there.

We can ask, in the Mishkan's courtyard, [why didn't Betzalel also build the courtyard first and then make the vessels] Why did he first build the *mizbeiach* and the other vessels of the courtyard, and then the draperies of the courtyard?

We can understand this as a way in *avodas Hashem*:

The Mishkan was built so the *Shechinah* would have a place to rest in this world.

And since everyone donated toward the building of the Mishkan, and their intention was to bring the *Shechinah* down to this world, Hashem placed His *Shechinah* in the midst of every Jew.

As it states (*Shmos* 25:8) ושכנתי בתוכם, "I will dwell in them," in every Jew.

Ohel Mo'ed was comprised of two rooms: the *heichel* and the Kodesh Kedoshim, the Holy of Holies. Both of these rooms, with their vessels, are called פנימי, the internal holiness [because they are the holier part of the Mishkan].

The Mishkan had a courtyard where the outside *mizbeaich* stood. These are called חיצוניות, the external holiness.

Man, as we explained, is also a Mishkan, so he also has internal and external holiness.

There is the tzaddik who serves Hashem with fear and love at every moment. His intentions are to bring pleasure to His Creator. Reward and punishment — in this world and the next — are meaningless to him [because his sole objective is to bring pleasure to Hashem].

His intentions are superior to the mitzvos he performs. The mitzvos can be called the details (פרט), while his intention is the כלל, the general. His intentions are called "first and foremost" because his intentions are superior to the mitzvos he performs. His intentions envelop (מקיף) the mitzvos he performs.

To serve Hashem in this manner is an internal service, עבודה פנימי. His intentions correspond to Ohel Mo'ed, which is משכן הפנימי, the internal section of the Mishkan. The mitzvos he performs correspond to the vessels that were in Ohel Mo'ed.

Then, there's a tzaddik who serves Hashem for reward and punishment. He avoids sins, and he does mitzvos to earn reward and to be protected from punishment.

This is also considered serving Hashem, since his caution demonstrates that he believes in Hashem, and he believes that there is reward and punishment.

Still, it is an external service, עבודה חיצונית, since his intentions are for the reward.

This person's mitzvos are superior to his intentions. The mitzvos are "first and foremost" in comparison to his intentions. [His intentions aren't ideal, and therefore, his good deeds, the holy mitzvos that he performs, are greater than his intentions.]

The Mishkan's courtyard and its utensils represent this form of serving Hashem. [The courtyard of the Mishkan represents those people who intend for reward and punishment. The vessels of the courtyard represent their mitzvos.]

We now understand why Betzalel first constructed Ohel Mo'ed, and then the vessels. This is because the intentions of the true tzaddik (to bring pleasure to Hashem) are greater, first, and foremost in comparison to his mitzvos. [Ohel Mo'ed represents perfect intentions. They are "first" and greater than the deeds. Therefore, Ohel Mo'ed was made "first," before its vessels, which signify the mitzvos.]

But by the courtyard, Betzalel made the utensils first and then the courtyard. This hints at the imperfect tzaddik, whose mitzvos are superior, first, and foremost, in comparison to his intentions. Therefore, the utensils, which correspond to good deeds, were made "first" before the courtyard, which denotes intentions.

We now return to our discussion:

The first intention [mentioned above, to serve Hashem to bring Hashem pleasure] — is called אדם, because אדם is *gematriya* מה, as in ונחנו מה, "We are what?" (*Shmos* 16:7) [indicating humility, which is the root of this lofty intention]. He is doing [Torah and mitzvos] solely to do Hashem's will.

The second intention [mentioned above, to serve Hashem to receive reward and to avert punishment] is called אלקי"ם, *gematriya* הטבע, nature, because he is serving Hashem in the mode of nature [since it's natural for people to do things for their own benefit].

But now, due to our sins [we don't have either form of intention]. גלינו מארצנו (*Musaf of yom tov,*), "we have been exiled from our earth." ארצינו has been exiled. [ארצינו, literally, "our earth," represents the natural, worldly approach, which is to serve Hashem to receive reward and avoid punishment. גלינו מארצינו means this approach has been exiled, and people aren't able to serve Hashem even with these intentions.]

וְנִתְרַחַקְנוּ מֵעַל אַדְמָתֵינוּ, לְשׁוֹן אָדָם, שֶׁהִיא בְּחִינָה א׳ כַּנַּ"ל,

ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתינו, "We have been become distant from our land." "אדמתינו" has the letters אדם in it, which are *gematriya* מ"ה, and indicate the first approach, [which is the humble approach, when one serves Hashem to bring Him pleasure. ונתרחקנו מעל אדמתינו means that that humble approach has also become distanced and exiled.]

פֵּירוּשׁ שֶׁב׳ הַבְּחִינוֹת הֵן בְּגָלוּת, אֲפִילּוּ בְּחִינָה הַב׳ אֵינָהּ בִּשְׁלֵמוּת לִהְיוֹת סוּר מֵרָע וַעֲשֵׂה טוֹב בְּמַחְשָׁבָה דִּיבּוּר וּמַעֲשֶׂה כָּרָאוּי עַל כָּל פָּנִים מֻחֲמַת בְּחִינָה הַב׳.

This means that both approaches are in exile. Even the second approach - to serve Hashem in thought, speech, and deed for reward and punishment is also not in its perfected state.

All this happened because of the troubles and hardships of exile.

7-Remember Hashem what happened to us" [explains that we are saying: זכור ה׳, "Remember Hashem, מה, that the attribute of מה (what, humility) היה, has become, לנו. The explanation is as follows:

The first approach, called מה, [humility, which is to serve Hashem, solely to give Hashem pleasure], היה, has become, לנו, which is the second intention and is gematriya אלקי"ם, and הטבע, nature.

The pasuk concludes, הביטה וראה את חרפתינו, "look and see our disgraces." חרפתינו, "disgraces," is in the plural, because both attributes aren't as they should be, due to the bitter exile. [*Tikun Chatzos* is stating that we lost מה, the ideal way to serve Hashem. It became לנו, representing the natural approach for reward and punishment. And even this second approach isn't perfect, due to the exile.]

The two intentions are hinted by the *roshei teivos* of אלה פקודי המשכן *gematriya* אלקי"ם, and by the roshei teivos of משכן העדות which spell מ"ה.

Rashi writes that משכן is written twice in this pasuk. Hinted in Rashi's words is that both approaches to serving Hashem were exiled because of our sins.

[The rectification is] solely with humility. With humility, one can serve Hashem with both intentions, because humility is to build the Mishkan.

Therefore ענוה is gematriya מ"ה אלקי"ם, [hinting at the two intentions, which one can attain with humility].

This was the work of the Levi'im. They would carry the Mishkan and erect it at the places where they encamped. This alludes to these two forms of intentions.

אשר פקד means redeemed (as in the pasuk פקד פקדתי, Shemos 3:16). [The pasuk is saying that serving Hashem with good intentions was redeemed], על פי משה, via humility. For Moshe represents humility, as it states (*Bamidbar* 12:3) והאיש משה ענו מאוד, "The man, Moshe, was very humble."

The *pasuk* is saying, אלה פקודי המשכן משכן העדות, that the two intentions for serving Hashem, אשר פקד, were redeemed and restored, משה, through humility. עבודת הלויים שביד איתמר, "by the Levi'im, performed under Isamar's management," which represent the two approaches of serving Hashem.

Because of humility, the two forms of serving Hashem were redeemed from exile. This is associated solely with Isamar's service, [for he was in charge of establishing Ohel Mo'ed and the courtyard, which represent the two forms of intentions – for Hashem, or for reward].

Elazar was appointed solely over the utensils, whereas Isamar was in charge of the wooden planks of Ohel Mo'ed, with the draperies that went around the courtyard, which represent these two intentions.

When we reestablish these two approaches of serving Hashem, which is to build the Mishkan, Moshiach will come to redeem us, speedily in our days. Amen, may this be His will.

Vayetzei

Hashem Does Everything

It states in this week's parashah (31:36) וַיִּחַר לְיַעֲקֹב וַיָּרֶב בְּלָבָן..., "Yaakov became angry and he quarreled with Lavan…" This is the first time that we find Yaakov becoming angry with Lavan. Yaakov worked twenty years for Lavan, and Lavan cheated him one hundred times, but still Yaakov didn't get angry. What happened at this final moment, when he was leaving, that he got angry at Lavan?

Lavan said (ibid. 29) יֶשׁ לְאֵל יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע וֵאלֹקֵי אֲבִיכֶם אֶמֶשׁ אָמַר אֵלַי לֵאמֹר הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ מִדַּבֵּר עִם יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד רָע, "I have the power to inflict harm upon you, but the G-d of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Beware of speaking with Yaakov either good or bad.'" What did Lavan mean when he said, יֶשׁ לְאֵל יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע, "I have the power to inflict harm upon you"? Why did he think he had this strength? If Hashem didn't want Lavan to harm Yaakov, how would he succeed in doing so? It is impossible to do anything without Hashem's decree.

This is the way of *reshaim*. Even if they believe in Hashem, they think they can do whatever they want, and Hashem won't prevent them.

Lavan thought he could do whatever he wanted and no one, not even Hashem, could stop him. He believed in this idea from the time he tricked Yaakov into marrying Leah. At least, that is what he thought. But at that event, Lavan didn't go against Hashem's will. For Chazal tell us that Leah cried a lot, so she shouldn't end up marrying Eisav. Hashem answered her tefillos, and this is the reason she was able to marry Yaakov. It was Hashem's plan that Leah marries Yaakov, and Lavan didn't act contrary to that. He was actually a *shaliach* in performing Hashem's will.

The Midrash (Tanchuma) writes, "How great is tefillah. Leah's tefillos didn't only abolish the decree [that she would need to marry Eisav], but it became even better, because she went before her sister!" This means Leah got married to Yaakov *before* Rachel did due to her tefillos. So, Lavan thought he tricked Yaakov; he might have thought that he even outsmarted Hashem. But all he really did was arrange the steps to carry out Hashem's will. For Hashem is in charge, and it is impossible to act contrary to His will.

Yaakov tolerated Lavan for twenty years, but when Lavan tried to teach apikorsus to him and his family, by saying, יֶשׁ לְאֵל יָדִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּכֶם רָע, "I have the power to inflict harm upon you", Yaakov became angry and rebuked him harshly.

One hundred times, Lavan tried to steal money from Yaakov, but Yaakov didn't become angry. When he tricked Yaakov and caused him to work an extra seven years without payment, Yaakov didn't become angry. He worked the following seven years loyally, without complaints, without anger, although Lavan tricked him into it.[1] Even when Lavan exchanged Rachel with Leah at the chasunah, the Torah doesn't say that Yaakov became angry. (The Torah says that Yaakov asked Lavan why he did it.) But when Lavan tried to bring kefirah into his heart, and into the hearts of his children, he was infuriated. Yaakov said to Lavan (31:41-42) זֶה לִּי עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּבֵיתֶךָ עֲבַדְתִּיךָ אַרְבַּע עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה בִּשְׁתֵּי בְנֹתֶיךָ וְשֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים בְּצֹאנֶךָ וַתַּחֲלֵף אֶת מַשְׂכֻּרְתִּי עֲשֶׂרֶת מֹנִים, לוּלֵי אֱלֹקֵי אָבִי אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם וּפַחַד יִצְחָק הָיָה לִי כִּי עַתָּה רֵיקָם שִׁלַּחְתָּנִי אֶת עָנְיִי וְאֶת יְגִיעַ כַּפַּי רָאָה אֱלֹקִים וַיּוֹכַח אָמֶשׁ, "This is twenty years that I have spent in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and

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1. Lavan agreed to give Rachel to Yaakov in exchange for seven years of labor, which Yaakov faithfully completed. He then deceitfully gave him Leah instead and told him that if he wished to marry Rachel, he would have to work an additional seven years.

six years for your animals, and you changed my wages tens of times. Had not the G-d of my father, the G-d of Avraham and the Fear of Yitzchak been for me, you would now have sent me away empty-handed. Hashem has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, and He rebuked you last night."

Yaakov was saying to Lavan, "Don't you see you can't do anything against Hashem's will? From all your trickery, I should have left your home a poor man, but I became wealthy, and your attempts to steal my money didn't help you. When Hashem wants someone to be wealthy, it will occur, and no one can prevent that. Similarly, if Hashem wants me to be safe and sound, you won't be able to harm me. It is impossible to act against Hashem."

We now understand what we say in the Haggadah Shel Pesach, לבן בקש לעקור את הכל, "Lavan desired to uproot everything." The *meforshim* struggle to understand where we find in the Torah that Lavan wanted to destroy "everything" – which means the entire Jewish nation. The Haggadah is referring to this episode, when Lavan came and told Yaakov that he had the ability to harm him. Lavan wanted Yaakov and his family to believe that everything is in man's hands, and Hashem can't stop him. He tried to impart his warped emunah to them, and that would be equivalent to killing them.[2]

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2. Lavan declared (31:53), אֱלֹקֵי אַבְרָהָם וֵאלֹהֵי נָחוֹר יִשְׁפְּטוּ בֵינֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִיהֶם, "May the G-d of Avraham and the god of Nachor judge between us, the god of their father." The pasuk then continues, וַיִּשָּׁבַע יַעֲקֹב בְּפַחַד אָבִיו יִצְחָק, "And Yaakov swore by the Fear of his father Yitzchak."

Rashi comments:

אלקי אברהם - קדש

ואלהי נחור - חול

אלהי אביהם - חול

When Lavan said אלקי אברהם, he was referring to Hashem. However, when he spoke of ואלהי נחור and אלהי אביהם, he was referring to avodah zarah.

Reb Yitzchak Matisyahu Luria zt"l asks: Why did the Torah record these heretical words? What do we gain from hearing Lavan's references to avodah zarah?

He answers that the Torah is teaching us how a person can protect and repair his heart and mind after being exposed to heretical ideas, words of avodah zarah, or apikorsus. A contemporary example is the messaging often heard in the news. Broadcasters frequently describe events as though everything occurs naturally, with no acknowledgment of Hashem's hand. This, too, is a subtle form of apikorsus. We should not assume that such messages leave no impression on us. Even when a person firmly believes in true emunah and recognizes that what he is hearing is contrary to Torah, the words can still leave an imprint on his mind.

What, then, is the remedy?

The holy sefarim teach that when one hears or reads words of avodah zarah or apikorsus, he should immediately respond with words of emunah. He should counteract the negative influence with a positive one. By speaking about Hashem and affirming his faith, he can nullify the harmful effect of the heretical words.

Accordingly, the Torah records Lavan's words of avodah zarah and then immediately tells us that וַיִּשָּׁבַע יַעֲקֹב בְּפַחַד אָבִיו יִצְחָק. Yaakov Avinu responded at once with words of emunah, swearing in the name of Hashem and thereby correcting the negative influence of what he had just heard. The Torah records this sequence to teach us how to react whenever we encounter words of kefirah, chalilah. We should immediately counter them with words of emunah, thereby dispelling their influence and strengthening our connection to Hashem.

Imrei Pinchas (עשר טהרת המידות אות כ"ט) quotes from Reb Refael of Bershid zt'l advice on avoiding anger. It's to believe that everything that occurs is by Hashem's hashgachah pratis. So, why should a person become angry? Nobody did anything to him. What happened was Hashem's plan… and it is for his good.

Let us remember that Hashem does everything. When we hear someone say that people have the strength to do things on their own, against Hashem's plan, quickly amend this by speaking words of emunah. As the holy sefarim tell us, speaking emunah amends and banishes the negative influence that came from hearing kefirah. Yaakov Avinu heard apikorsus from Lavan, and he immediately corrected it with his words of emunah.[3]

When Hishtadlus Doesn't Help, Bitachon is Enough

Hashem does everything, alone, and He certainly doesn't need our help. Nevertheless, Hashem wants us to make hishtadlus.

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3. Reb Asher Freund zt"l, renowned for his extraordinary generosity and acts of kindness, once arranged for a large number of chickens to be distributed to the poor. At the time, he did not have the funds to purchase them and therefore borrowed money to do so. Several yungerleit and bachurim regularly assisted him with his tzedakah and chesed activities, and together they loaded the chickens into a refrigerated truck.

At some point, one of the volunteers became upset over a certain matter (the details are not important here) and, in his frustration, turned off the refrigeration unit. It was the middle of the summer, and before long all of the chickens had spoiled. The entire shipment was ruined, and the money that Reb Asher had borrowed was lost.

Reb Asher asked his gabbai to drive him to a forest. Upon arriving, he told him, "Wait here," and proceeded alone into the woods. Curious about what his rebbe was doing, the gabbai quietly followed from a distance. There he heard Reb Asher repeatedly crying out, "Ribono Shel Olam, it is not him, it is You!" He repeated these words again and again, reminding himself that he had no reason to be angry with anyone. Everything was bashert. Had Hashem not willed it, it could not have happened.

After some time, Reb Asher returned to the car and then said to the gabbai, "I would like one more moment in the forest." He went back, and this time the gabbai again listened from afar. Now Reb Asher was praising Hashem for what had occurred. He believed with complete faith that since it came from Hashem, it was certainly for the good. He declared, "Ribono Shel Olam, it is not him, it is You. Yasher koach!"

Reb Shlomo Yunger shlita, dayan and rav of the Tosher chassidim in Kiryas Yoel, related a similar perspective from the Tosher Rebbe zt"l. Once, the mosdos of Tosh, including its yeshivos and schools, needed assistance with certain governmental matters. A lawyer met with the Tosher Rebbe and asked, "Who is the owner of the mosdos?"

The Rebbe replied, "What kind of question is that? ס'איז דעם אייבערשטנ'ס. The mosdos belong to Hashem!"

The lawyer responded, "Of course. But practically speaking, who is the baal habayis?"

Again the Rebbe answered, "דער אייבערשטער. Hashem is the baal habayis."

The lawyer tried a different approach. "When an important decision must be made, who has the final word?"

Once again, the Rebbe replied, "דער אייבערשטער. Hashem decides."

As a related aside, when the Tosher Rebbe first arrived in Canada from Europe in 1951 (תשי"א), an immigration official asked him what he intended to do in Canada.

The Rebbe answered, "What kind of question is that? I am Hashem's servant, and I intend to do whatever Hashem asks me to do."

What is the purpose of hishtadlus? Wouldn't it be better for Hashem to do everything alone, without our hishtadlus? Then everyone would recognize Hashem, and His name would be sanctified in the world! Everyone would see that Hashem feeds the hungry, heals the ill, and so on. But as the system is now, with people making hishtadlus, most people fail to recognize Hashem. They think doctors heal the ill, the workplace brings parnassah, and so on. So why does Hashem require us to make hishtadlus?

The answer is to test us. When we make our hishtadlus, everything appears natural, and to believe that it is Hashem, and not the strength of man, is the great and difficult test of life. We must recognize that it is all an illusion, and behind the curtains, everything is from Hashem.

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 68:2) states that when Yaakov Avinu sought a shidduch for himself, he said (Tehillim 121) שיר למעלות אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבא עזרי, "I raise my eyes to the mountains, from where will my salvation come?" Yaakov said these words because he was concerned. He wanted to get married, but how could he get married without money? Who would marry someone who can't give anything for a dowry? He said, "When Eliezer traveled to bring Rivkah [to marry Yitzchak], it states (24:10) ויקח העבד עשרה גמלים, that he came with ten camels and a lot of wealth. But I don't have even one ring or one bracelet with me"!

Then he said, "What am I thinking? Should I lose hope in my Creator? Chas v'shalom. I will not lose hope. עזרי מעם ה'... אל יתן למוט רגלך אל ינום שומרך. הנה לא ינום ולא יישן שומר ישראל, "My help is from Hashem… He will not allow your foot to falter. Your Guardian will not slumber. Behold the Guardian of Yisrael will neither slumber nor sleep." He strengthened himself with emunah and with bitachon that Hashem will help him.[4]

The Ksav Sofer zt'l explains that initially Yaakov wanted to go in the ways of the Avos, Avraham and Yitzchak, who made hishtadlus in natural ways to find their shidduch and their needs. This is the reason Eliezer came with ten camels, with a lot of wealth, which could help him find a shidduch for Yitzchak. Avraham Avinu told Eliezer to bring along the wealth. He didn't want to rely on a miracle.[5] Therefore, when Elifaz took away Yaakov's money, Yaakov asked, מאין יבא עזרי, "From where will my salvation come?" עזרי refers to a shidduch, called עזר כנגדו (Bereishis 2:18). He wondered how he would find a shidduch if he didn't have natural means of hishtadlus to receive it. But then he thought: Even when I perform hishtadlus, it isn't the hishtadlus that helps me. Everything is from Hashem. I won't succeed without Hashem's help, and Hashem is able to help without my hishtadlus. As Chazal say, "The One Who said oil should create

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4. The Rema m'Pano writes that when one is seeking a shidduch, it is a segulah to recite this chapter of Tehillim (Chapter 121) before the final יהיו לרצון at the conclusion of Shemoneh Esrei. The Bnei Yissaschar writes that this segulah is בדוק ומנוסה, tried and proven to be effective. It is considered a particularly powerful segulah for finding one's shidduch.

Some have the custom to recite this chapter after the first יהיו לרצון. Others recite it daily, even when they are not actively involved in the "parshah" of shidduchim, because this chapter is regarded as mesugal for many forms of blessing and assistance. My personal custom is to recite it every day at the end of Shemoneh Esrei.

5. Rashi (Bereishis 24:10) writes, "שטר מתנה כתב ליצחק על כל אשר לו, כדי שיקפצו לשלוח לו בתם" - Avraham wrote a document gifting all of his assets to Yitzchak so that people would be eager to offer their daughters as a shidduch for him. This is an example of how the Avos, whenever possible, relied on normal hishtadlus and worked within the framework of teva, while recognizing that the outcome rests in Hashem's hands.

light, He can decree that vinegar should give light." Hashem generally wants us to make hishtadlus to conceal the miracle, to conceal His presence. But now, since Elifaz took away all my money, I can't make hishtadlus, but that doesn't mean Hashem won't help me. My successes are always from Hashem, and Hashem is still with me. Due to the circumstances, I am exempt from hishtadlus, so I can rely on Hashem to help me find my shidduch, even if I don't have money. עזרי מעם ה׳, my help will come from Hashem, עשה שמים וארץ, Who created heaven and earth."

The Yerushalmi (Terumos 8:3) says that Reb Yanai put the four feet of his bed into pails of water so that snakes wouldn't climb up. Once, he awoke and found a snake on his bed. Reb Yanai commanded the buckets of water to be removed. He would trust in Hakadosh Baruch Hu to protect him from snakes. Reb Ben Tzion Felman zt'l explains that initially Reb Yanai wanted to do hishtadlus, but when he saw that it wasn't working, he was able to rely on Hashem without hishtadlus.[6]

It states (28:11) וַיִּפְגַּע בַּמָּקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאַבְנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיָּשֶׂם מְרַאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בַּמָּקוֹם הַהוּא, "He arrived at the place and lodged there because the sun had set, and he took some of the stones of the place and placed them at his head, and he lay down in that place." Rashi (28:11) writes that Yaakov Avinu put stones around his head to protect him from wild animals. The question is, how would stones around the head protect him from wild animals? And even if they protect the head, what will protect the rest of his body? Yaakov couldn't fully protect himself, so he did some hishtadlus, and he trusted in Hashem to protect him. Salvation comes from Hashem, and Hashem can help with just a small amount of hishtadlus, as well. And when no hishtadlus is possible, Hashem can help without any hishtadlus at all.

Shame

When Rachel bore a son, Yosef, she said (30:23) אָסַף אֱלֹקִים אֶת חֶרְפָּתִי, "Hashem has taken away my disgrace." Be'er Mayim Chayim zt'l says that אֱלֹקִים represents midas hadin, harsh judgment. The pasuk tells us that אָסַף אֱלֹקִים, midas hadin gathers and goes away, אֶת חֶרְפָּתִי, when one suffers shame and embarrassment.

A person should be happy when he endures shame and embarrassment because it saves him from much greater suffering. Shame is very painful, but so much good comes from it. It removes dinim (hardships, yesurim). If a person knew how much he is gaining from the humiliation, he would send gifts to the people who embarrass him.

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6. Reb Ben Tzion Felman zt"l once took out a large loan from a gemach a week before one of his children's chasunahs. As he left the gemach, a thief who knew that people often left there carrying significant sums of money was waiting outside and stole the entire amount.

Reb Ben Tzion viewed this as a sign from Heaven that he was not meant to pursue further hishtadlus in the ordinary way. Hashem would help him through a different channel. And indeed, he ultimately received the yeshuah and was able to cover all of the wedding expenses without engaging in any additional natural means of hishtadlus.

Reb Ben Tzion would often say that he could write entire sefarim describing the miraculous ways Hashem enabled him to marry off his children. He remarked that he never did so because people would have difficulty believing the stories, but he personally witnessed countless miracles.

He once explained to Rav Munkavitz why he made no further efforts after the money was stolen. Hashem wants a person to engage in hishtadlus, he said, in order to conceal the miracles through which He runs the world. But when the hishtadlus itself is clearly accomplishing the opposite and only making matters worse, there is no longer a reason to continue pursuing it. At that point, a person can place his trust in Hashem and rely on Him alone for salvation.

Chazal (Rosh 17a) say כל המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו, "Whoever goes beyond his limits [to forgive and to tolerate others] all of his aveiros are forgiven."[7] When one hears

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7. Every Rosh Chodesh evening, the Baba Sali zt"l would travel from Netivot, where he lived, to Yerushalayim, where he would conduct a special tefillah followed by a seudas Rosh Chodesh. The seudah was always a lengthy affair, as was the Baba Sali's holy way, and many people attended.

On one occasion, the car was already packed with all the food the Rebbetzin had prepared for the seudah, and they were ready to depart for Yerushalayim. Just then, a man arrived and asked permission to speak with the Rav. The gabbaiim told him, "It is Erev Rosh Chodesh, and the Rav does not receive visitors today. We're sorry."

The man pleaded with them. He explained that he had traveled from Haifa, in the north of Eretz Yisrael, to Netivot, in the south. To get there, he had taken multiple buses, and he said that he only wished to speak with the Rav for one minute.

The gabbaim had rachmanus on him and allowed him to enter.

As soon as he came in, the man burst into bitter tears. He explained that many years had passed since his chasunah, yet he and his wife still had no children.

"Please, Rav," he cried. "Give me a brachah. I came all the way from Haifa."

The Rav, who was already prepared to travel, put everything aside and asked the Yid to sit with him. He then asked the Rebbetzin to bring the first course from the food that had already been packed into the car. The Rebbetzin and the gabbaim were surprised, but if this was what the Rav wanted, they obviously complied.

The gabbaim assumed it would last only a few minutes and that the Rav would then excuse himself and continue on to Yerushalayim. Instead, he washed for a meal and sat there completely calm, as though he had nothing else planned for that night besides spending time with this guest.

The Baba Sali spoke with the man about various matters before turning to his problem. He asked which segulos he had tried in order to merit children.

The man replied that he had tried every segulah imaginable. He had visited the kevarim of tzaddikim throughout the country, yet he still had not seen his yeshuah.

As was his custom during a meal, the Baba Sali sang songs and learned Mishnayos. The Rebbetzin and the gabbaim watched in amazement. Had the Baba Sali forgotten that he had a seudah waiting for him in Yerushalayim?

But he continued speaking with the man. The second course was served, followed by dessert, and throughout the meal the Baba Sali conversed with his guest, sang songs, and learned Mishnayos.

When the meal finally ended, the Baba Sali stood up and warmly blessed the man.

"Next year, you will have a baby boy," he said.

They bid one another farewell.

As they traveled to Yerushalayim, the Baba Sali explained to the Rebbetzin and the gabbaim what had taken place, for he knew they were puzzled.

"I will explain," he said. "This man came from far away, but I saw that according to the rules of nature there was no way for him to have a child. I asked Hakadosh Baruch Hu to give me an idea of how I could help him.

"Hashem gave me a brilliant idea. There is a key that opens the gates of all yeshuos and removes all dinim. It is when a person is ma'avir al midosav, when he goes beyond his natural inclinations and personal considerations.

people shame him and doesn't respond, all his aveiros will be forgiven. The same applies to *vitur*. When one is mevater, all the gates of heaven open for him. At first glance, it seems like he is losing something due to the *vitur*. There will come a time when he will see how much he gained from being mevater.

Leah was mevater for her sister, Rochel. Leah was pregnant with a boy, who would be her seventh child. She davened that the son in her womb become a girl. Hashem answered her tefillos, and the child was Dinah. Rashi (30:21) explains that Leah realized that if she bears a son, eleven of the shevatim will be born, and only one son would be left for Rochel. (They knew that there would only be twelve shevatim.) Rachel would only bear one son, and she would have fewer children than Bilhah and Zilpah, the handmaids who had two sons each. This would be an embaressment for Rachel. Therefore, Leah was mevater on the wonderful privilege of having one of the shevatim, and she davened that the child be a girl, which occurred, to help her sister.

It seems that she lost the privilege of being the mother of a shevet. But she gained from this vitur because Dinah's daughter was Osnas. Osnas married Yosef and gave birth to Efraim and Menasheh, both of whom are counted among the shevatim. She became the mother of two shevatim! This is because one gains from being mevater.

Rachel was also mevater. She gave the simanim to Leah, which enabled Leah to marry Yaakov (See Rashi, 29:25). People think she lost from the vitur. If it weren't for the vitur, perhaps all twelve sons would be hers. But she didn't lose anything from this vitur. She only gained. She was childless; she couldn't bear children, and only in the merit of her vitur did she bear children. Without the vitur, she wouldn't have any children at all. This is because one gains a lot when he is mevater.

"I thought to myself, 'How can I be ma'avir al hamiddos?' I decided that at a time when my entire being was yearning to make the trip to Yerushalayim, and everything was already prepared, the food was cooked and packed. Even the driver was waiting, I would sit calmly and eat a meal with this man as though I had nothing else to do.

"It was a great nisayon for me, and it was also a great nisayon for all of you, for the Rebbetzin and for the gabbaim. Yet all of you remained calm. No one stopped us and insisted that we leave. You remained quiet, without nervousness and without anger, and that transformed the moment into a tremendous eis ratzon.

"At such a time, whatever I would ask for would be granted. Therefore, the brachah I gave him will take effect."

Bas Ayin

12th of Kislev: The Yahrzeit of the Bas Ayin (Rebbe Avraham Dov ben Rebbe Dovid zy'a)

Chazal call a yahrtzeit הלולא, which is Aramaic for chasunah. The Yismach Yisrael (Me'oron shel Yisrael 14 Shevat 2) says that 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* (yahrtzeit) of a tzaddik, the tzaddik is reminded of his obligations to the people who strive to learn from him and to follow his ways.[8]

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8. Chazal say (Chulin 7a), "Tzaddikim are greater after their petirah than when they were alive." This is especially true on their yahrtzeit.

Rav Yissachar Dov of Belz zt"l explained that when a tzaddik ascends to Heaven, he looks down and sees the suffering in this world. However, from his vantage point in Heaven, he understands clearly that everything people endure is ultimately for their benefit as is told about the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk zt"l, who promised his disciple, Rebbe Mendel of Riminov zt"l, that after his petirah he would annul a certain decree that had been issued against Klal Yisrael. Some time later, Rebbe Elimelech appeared to Rebbe Mendel in a dream and said, "Now that I am in Heaven, I no longer see the decree as something bad. I understand that it is for the good. How, then, can I annul it?"

On a yahrtzeit, however, the tzaddik descends to this world and once again sees and feels the tzaros of Klal Yisrael as we experience them. At that time, he is moved to act on our behalf, to annul harsh decrees and daven for yeshuos for Bnei Yisrael. This is why a yahrtzeit is called a hilulah, an expression of joy. There is much joy and many yeshuos on this day because the tzaddik understands our suffering and prays for our salvation.

ישראל נושע בה' תשועת עולמים, "Yisrael receives salvation from Hashem, an eternal salvation." The roshei teivos spell בת עין, hinting that yeshuos come to Klal Yisrael on the yahrtzeit of the Bas Ayin. Similarly, the pasuk states (Tehillim 34:3), בה' תתהלל נפשי ישמעו ענוים וישמחו, "My soul glories in Hashem; let the humble hear and rejoice." Here, too, the roshei teivos spell בת עין.

The literal translation of hilulah is "chasunah." At a chasunah, gifts are distributed. At a hilulah, Hashem gives a gift to the tzaddik by enabling him to bestow goodness upon Bnei Yisrael. Naturally, those who are closest to the tzaddik are among the first to receive these brachos. Therefore, everyone should strive to connect to this great tzaddik, whether by making a seudah, a l'chaim, visiting the kever, or in some other meaningful way. Most importantly, one should learn from the tzaddik's ways and strive 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.

When the Bas Ayin left Avritch to travel to Eretz Yisrael, many of his chassidim accompanied him to the port of Odesa. Once the Rebbe had boarded the ship, his chassidim asked, "How can we maintain our connection with you?"

The Bas Ayin replied that Chazal teach us that we connect to Hashem by emulating His attributes. "Just as He is compassionate, so shall you be compassionate." Likewise, the Bas Ayin explained, if they would emulate the middos that he had worked on and cultivated since his youth, they would remain connected to him. Even if separated by great distances, they would be connected as though standing face to face.

"I have three primary middos," he told them, "that I have guarded carefully since my youth: never to speak lashon hara, never to tell a lie, and to remain far from gaavah. If you, too, undertake to uphold these three traits, we will remain united."

Indeed, these three middos are among the central themes found throughout his holy sefer, Bas Ayin.

The Beis Avraham (Noach) teaches: "On the yahrtzeit of tzaddikim, even if you did not know them during their lifetime and never heard Torah directly from them, nevertheless, by following in their ways, gathering

to recount stories about them, reviewing their teachings, and learning from them how to serve Hashem, one attains a connection to those tzaddikim."

A catastrophic earthquake struck Tzefas and Teveria on the 24th of Teves, 5597 (1836). The houses in Tzefas were built on a mountainside, one beside the other, with weak foundations. When the earthquake struck, the foundations gave way, and the homes collapsed.

Approximately two thousand Yidden were niftar, and many more were injured, rachmana litzlan.

The Bas Ayin was in his beis medrash davening Minchah when the earthquake began. The walls shook violently. Some people wanted to flee, but the Bas Ayin instructed everyone to gather around him. He fell to the ground and began to daven.

Most of the domed roof collapsed, and all four walls came down. Yet the people gathered around the Bas Ayin were saved. The section of the ceiling directly above them remained intact.

To this day, visitors to the Bas Ayin's beis medrash can see that the ceiling has two distinct levels. This is because half of the roof collapsed and had to be rebuilt, while the section above the area where the Bas Ayin stood remained untouched. A plaque in the beis medrash commemorates the event and notes: 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 later explained why he had fallen to the ground during the earthquake:

"I saw that the stones were not falling downward but sideways. It was as though one wall was hurling stones at the opposite wall. I understood from this that the *samech-mem* was carrying out the destruction. In such a situation, the only protection is complete humility. That is why I threw myself to the ground."

After exiting the beis medrash, the Bas Ayin, together with his chassidim and other survivors, worked tirelessly to rescue people trapped beneath the rubble. The weather was cold and rainy, yet they continued their efforts. Lives had to be saved, and the niftarim needed to be recovered and brought to kever Yisrael.

Once conditions stabilized somewhat, the question arose whether the community should remain in Tzefas. Most of the homes had been destroyed, and rebuilding would require enormous resources. Many rabbanim concluded that it was time to relocate to Yerushalayim, and most of the Prushim community did indeed make the move.

The Bas Ayin, however, dedicated himself to rebuilding the Jewish community of Tzefas. He sent emissaries to chutz la'aretz to raise funds, and through his efforts, the city was rebuilt. This time, homes were constructed on the mountaintop rather than on the slope and with space between them.

In the year 5601, a plague broke out in Tzefas. The Bas Ayin fell ill and remained sick for several days. Before his passing, he asked that his disciple, Reb Shmuel Heller zt"l, come visit him, as he wished to share profound teachings and secrets he had received from his own rebbeim.

However, Reb Shmuel's family feared the contagious disease and would not allow him to go. Reb Shmuel Heller, who later served as Rav of Tzefas, always regretted having lost that opportunity.

Before his petirah, the Bas Ayin declared, "I am the last victim of this plague. After me, no one else will die."

And so it was. His passing served as an atonement for the people of Tzefas, and the plague subsided.

Reb Moshe Leib Heller zt"l was a chassid of the Bas Ayin. The final day of his life fell on a Friday, shortly before Shabbos. For a long time he lingered in a state of goses, hovering between life and death.

His brother, Reb Shmuel Heller, was concerned that if this continued into Shabbos it might result in some chillul Shabbos. He therefore said to him, "It is getting late. Shabbos is almost here."

At that very moment, Reb Moshe Leib turned over, returned his neshamah to his Creator, and was buried just before the onset of Shabbos.

To receive yeshuos from tzaddikim, one has to believe in them. 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 comes to a tzaddik, and he believes in 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 yeshu'ah.[9]

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, wondrous *yeshuos* will come down.

The Rebbe of Tosh zt'l (Avodas Avodah) said, "I know a 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.[10]

On Motzei Shabbos, Reb Moshe Leib appeared to his brother in a dream and described what had transpired in Heaven.

He explained that because he had been buried only moments before Shabbos, there had not been sufficient time for the Heavenly Court to evaluate his judgment. As a result, he experienced a peaceful and pleasant Shabbos. After Shabbos, a malach came to him and said, "Come with me."

Reb Moshe Leib replied, "Throughout my life, I never did anything without first consulting my Rebbe. I do not wish to go with you until I have asked my Rebbe for guidance."

The malach agreed and brought him to the heichal of the Bas Ayin. Reb Moshe Leib entered while the malach remained outside.

The Bas Ayin asked him about his petirah, and Reb Moshe Leib told him that a malach was waiting outside to take him.

The Bas Ayin responded, "Who is this malach? You are here. Stay here!"

And he remained there.

9. Fifteen bachurim jointly accepted upon themselves that if they became engaged before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, they would make a seudah in honor of the tzaddik. By the time the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit arrived in תשפ"ב, fourteen of them had become chassanim.

One of the bachurim had mocked the idea. He did not believe that this segulah, making a kabbalah to hold a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin, could bring about a yeshuah. In fact, he was the only one in the group who did not become engaged.

It was this bachur himself who related the story to us. Through tears, he begged that it be publicized in order to strengthen the emunah of other Yidden and serve as a kaparah for his skepticism.

The Bas Ayin once traveled with a group of people to daven at the kivrei tzaddikim in Tzfas. When they arrived at one of the kevarim, he overheard one man say to his friend, "Who says that this tzaddik is actually buried here?"

The Bas Ayin turned to him and replied, "Whoever doubts a mesorah that has been accepted by Klal Yisrael is an apikores."

We recount this story as a reminder to those who consider themselves wise and constantly ask, "Who says?" and similar questions. Such attitudes can cool and weaken a person's emunah.

10. There was a Slonimer chassid in Tzefas named Reb Shlomo Gross z"l. He sold kerosene for a living but barely managed to support his family.

On the night of the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, Reb Shlomo went to daven at the Bas Ayin's kever. That night, the Bas Ayin appeared 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?"

The next morning, Reb Shlomo gathered ten people and made a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin. He could not afford to sponsor the seudah on his own, but he spread out a white tablecloth, and each participant contributed something for the meal. During the seudah, they shared divrei Torah and recounted stories about the Bas Ayin.

After the seudah, Reb Shlomo purchased a lottery ticket and won an enormous sum of money. He donated part of the winnings to the Slonimer Yeshivah and requested that a portion of the funds be used each year to sponsor a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin.

Reb Shlomo stipulated several conditions for the annual seudah: there should be a white tablecloth, divrei Torah should be shared, and stories of the Bas Ayin should be told. He wanted the seudah to resemble the one he had made on the day he merited his yeshuah.

This custom 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 have merited yeshuos through making a seudah on the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit. We will mention just a few:

I heard the following story firsthand. A certain man had a three-year-old son who was neither walking nor talking. The doctors told him that it would likely be quite some time before the child would begin to develop and acquire those abilities.

In Cheshvan תשפ"ו, the father accepted upon himself that if his son began walking before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit, he would make a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin. At the time he made this kabbalah, the child could not take even a single step. Yet on כ"ה חשון, the child began taking a few steps, and by ב' כסלו he was walking normally.

Before the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit in תשפ"ה, a man donated money toward a seudah being organized in honor of the Bas Ayin. The very next day, while traveling from Beitar to Yerushalayim, he found himself in the midst of a terror attack. Terrorists were firing in all directions, and some of the shots were aimed toward him. He backed up against a wall, and stones from the wall fell on top of him.

Terrified, he cried out to Hashem, "Yesterday I gave money in honor of the Bas Ayin!"

Immediately afterward, the terrorists turned away from him and began shooting in another direction. His life was spared.

Reb Moshe Kleinman shlita, a rosh kollel in Bnei Brak, delivers a weekly Thursday night shiur in the holy sefer Or HaChaim.

In תשפ"ה, the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit fell on the same night as the shiur, and the participants made a seudah in the Bas Ayin's honor.

At that time, Reb Moshe had three older children who were waiting for their shidduchim. His oldest child, a son, had reached a significantly advanced age for a bachur. During the seudah, those present resolved that if all three children became engaged before the next yahrtzeit, they would sponsor a large seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin.

Remarkably, all three of Reb Moshe's older children, two sons and a daughter, became engaged before the next yahrtzeit. Both sons were even married before that date.

An especially striking detail is that the second wedding took place on ה' כסלו, and the final sheva brachos, hosted by participants in the shiur, was held on the Bas Ayin's yahrtzeit itself.

In another case, a beis medrash was organizing a seudah in honor of the Bas Ayin. One yungerman donated five hundred shekel and asked that the merit be dedicated to his brother-in-law, who was in a coma. Later, he discovered that at the very time he donated, his brother-in-law had awakened and opened his eyes.

His Ways

Towards the end of the Bas Ayin's life, he moved from Avritz, Ukraine, to Eretz Yisrael. He 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 with them until after Simchas Torah. On Hoshanah Rabba, the Bas Ayin heard a woman tell her son, "Yerachmiel! Bring down the carpets from the roof. Tomorrow Yidden will *bentch Geshem*, and their *tefillos* will certainly be answered, and it will rain strongly. All the carpets will get wet."

It was this conversation that persuaded the Bas Ayin to remain in Tzefas, and not move to Yerushalayim. 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 regular Yid, and 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 surface of his legs was black, and they asked the *almanah* about it because they needed to know how to prepare him for the burial. This is the story she told:

When he was younger, working as a merchant in *chutz le'aretz*, he endured many difficult tests, and it came about that he 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, he is black from the burns."[11]

The Bas Ayin said that he saw a column of fire in front of this man's coffin, so he joined the *levayah*. The Gemara (*Kesubos* 17.)

There is tremendous value in this form of פרסומי ניסא, publicizing the miracles, and in fulfilling the pasuk of שיחו בכל נפלאותיו, recounting the wonders that Hashem performs. Besides our obligation to thank and praise Hashem for His kindness, there is another benefit: when others hear about these miracles, they are inspired to follow the same path.

Many of our fellow Yidden are in need of yeshuos. When they hear of the salvations experienced by these בעלי מעשה, they too will be inspired to undertake similar acts, and they will likewise merit Hashem's help. They will emerge from darkness into light.

These stories also teach us that the Bas Ayin continues to stand and daven on behalf of Klal Yisrael. Therefore, one should not be satisfied with small requests. Open your mouth wide and ask for great things, trusting that Hashem can grant them, as it says (Tehillim 81:11): הרחב פיך ואמלאהו, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."

11. Someone once brought his son to Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt"l and, with great pain, informed the Rebbe that the young man had decided to marry a non-Jewish woman, rachmana litzlan.

The Rebbe turned to the bachur and said, "I cannot convince you not to marry her, but I have two requests. First, wear a tallis katan to the wedding. Second, insist that your father attend."

The bachur was delighted with the Rebbe's advice. His father had not planned on attending the wedding, and now, in exchange for the minor concession of wearing tzitzis, his father would be present on his special day.

says that this honor (that fire goes before the niftar) is given to only one or two people in each generation. That means he is so holy that no one has the right to come too close to him. He merited it because of this *mesirus nefesh*.

When the Bas Ayin lived in Avritz, a meshulach from Eretz Yisrael would annually come to Avritz to collect money, and the Bas Ayin would always ask him about how life was in 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 is true. However, I don't see the stones of Eretz Yisrael resembling diamonds."

The meshulach, a tzaddik, 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 reached the level to recognize that even the stones of Eretz Yisrael are diamonds. He came out and made a seudah for his chasidim to celebrate this achievement.

Studying Bas Ayin

It is well known that lighting a candle li'iluy nishmas a *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. We understand that the primary נר, candle, is דברך; when one studies his divrei Torah, which is אור לנתיבתי, it 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 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.[12]

At the wedding, there was a great deal of drinking. At one point, the chasan became hot and loosened his shirt. When people noticed the tzitzis he was wearing, they began shouting, "He's still a Jew! He deceived the bride. She thought he had abandoned the practice of Judaism!"

The drunken crowd became enraged and was prepared to lynch him. His father, however, managed to grab his son and escape with him from the hall.

(Rebbe Yissachar Dov had insisted that the father attend precisely so that he would be there to save his son.)

12. Yaakov Avinu requested of Yosef (Bereishis 47:29), אַל נָא תִקְבְּרֵנִי בְּמִצְרָיִם, "Please do not bury me in Mitzrayim." The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 96:5) explains that Yaakov did not want to be buried in Mitzrayim because the land of Mitzrayim would eventually be struck with the Ten Makkos. The Midrash adds the words, שלא יפדו בי המצריים, "So that the Egyptians should not be spared because of me."

The Bnei Yissaschar (Agra D'Kallah, Vayechi) explains this Midrash as follows:

The Gemara (Bava Metzia 84b) relates that after Reb Elazar, the son of Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai, was niftar, he was not buried immediately. Rather, his body remained in the attic of his home for many years. The Gemara states that throughout that period, the entire neighborhood was protected in his merit.

Similarly, Yaakov Avinu understood that if he were buried in Mitzrayim, his presence there would bring protection to the Egyptians and prevent them from being punished with the Ten Makkos. This is why Yaakov did not want to be buried in Mitzrayim. He wanted the makkos to be carried out against the Egyptians.

From this source we gain some appreciation for the tremendous merit of kivrei tzaddikim and of those who come to a tzaddik's kever to daven. If the kever of a tzaddik could protect the resha'im of Mitzrayim, the very people who enslaved and persecuted Klal Yisrael, then it can certainly bring protection to those who come there seeking Hashem's mercy.

Surely the tzaddik will daven on their behalf, asking that they be blessed with yeshuos and with Hashem's compassion.