

Parashas
Chukas

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ה' תמוז תשפ"ו
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י"ז ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ
רבי גמליאל הכהן
רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

טיב המערכת

There was no water ולא היה מים

A certain man fell ill, lo aleinu, with a severe illness. He did everything in his power to be healed. He turned to the best doctors and spent a great deal of money on medications. Of course, he did not neglect prayer either; he, his family, and all his acquaintances increased their tefillos for his complete recovery. And one day, HaKadosh Baruch Hu sent him salvation in the form of a new medication that saved his life. After he recovered, the man gathered all his acquaintances for a great *seudat hoda'ah* [thanks giving meal]. He recounted and described the entire chain of events—from the onset of the illness, through all the doctors and types of medications he tried, until the great salvation. He, of course, remembered to thank everyone for their many tefillos, and in the end he thanked HaKadosh Baruch Hu with emotional words for saving him from death to life! Indeed, it is moving.

ויבואו בני ישראל מדבר צין... ותמת שם מרים... ולא היה מים לעדה, ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן... ויבוא משה ואהרן מפני הקהל אל פתח אוהל... "מועד יפלו על פניהם... and Miriam died there... and there was no water for the congregation, and they gathered against Moshe and against Aharon... and Moshe and Aharon came from before the congregation to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they fell on their faces." (20:1-6) We are certain that when Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen heard the distress of the Bnei Yisrael that they had no water to drink, it pained them greatly. And seemingly, they should have tried to produce water for the thirsty people. However, at that moment Moshe and Aharon did something else: they fell on their faces, meaning they prayed to Hashem that He send His salvation. And the Gemara (Taanis 14b) teaches us that "an important person is not permitted to fall on his face unless he is answered like Yehoshua bin Nun." And if Moshe and Aharon indeed fell on their faces, it is a sign that they knew their prayer would be answered.

That Moshe and Aharon prayed to Hashem at a time of distress and were certain that their prayer would be answered is not a novelty at all. But the Torah tells this to us so that we too will learn from their actions and know what a Jew must do in a time of distress. And indeed, we are all believers, the children of believers, but if, chas v'shalom, distress comes upon a person, he first tries all the physical efforts. He turns to doctors and tries to do everything in his power, and only if he does not succeed does he turn in prayer to Hashem: "Only You can save me." But here we learn that one must immediately turn in prayer to Hashem and be certain in His salvation, for 'הבוטח בהשם חסד' - "one who trusts in Hashem, kindness will surround him." (Tehillim 32:10)

Tiv HaTorah - Chukas

להתיירא מן החטא
To fear sin

הַנִּגַּע בְּמַת לְכָל נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וְטָמֵא שִׁבַּעַת יָמִים: הוּא יִתְחַטֵּא בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִטְהַר וְאִם לֹא יִתְחַטֵּא בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לֹא יִטְהַר: כָּל הַנִּגַּע בְּמַת בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָמוּת וְלֹא יִתְחַטֵּא אֶת מִשְׁכַּן ה' טָמֵא וּנְכַרְתָּהּ הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי נִדָּה לֹא זָרַק עָלָיו טָמֵא יִהְיֶה עוֹד טָמֵא וְתוֹ: (וי, יא - יג)

Whoever touches the corpse of any human soul will be impure for a seven-day period. He shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall be pure; but if he will not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be pure. Whoever touches a dead body, a human soul who will have died, and will not have purified himself, he has made the Mishkan of Hashem impure, and that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of sprinkling has not been cast upon him, he shall be impure; his impurity is still upon him. (19:11-13)

Behold, anyone who reflects upon these posukim sees that the Torah repeats four times, one after the other, its instruction that the purification of one who has become impure through contact with a corpse is through the sprinkling of the water of the red cow [Parah Adumah]. For the essence of the law can already be known from the first posuk and from half of the second posuk. From what it says, "One who touches a dead body of any human soul shall be impure for seven days; he shall purify himself with it on the third day and on the seventh day he shall become pure," we can already know the law in all its details—both the causes of impurity and the particulars of purification. And it is self-understood that as long as the impure person has not purified himself, he remains in his impurity. Why then does it need to repeat the matter with a "double condition" and say again, "And if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he shall not become pure"?

We also already know that it is forbidden for an impure person to enter the Mikdash from the posuk that states (Vayikra 12:4), "בבל קודש לא תגע ואל" - "In any holy thing she shall not touch, and to the Sanctuary she shall not come." Thus there is no novelty also in the third posuk, which says that "Anyone who touches a dead person, the soul of a man who died, and does not purify himself, has defiled the Mishkan of Hashem," etc., "for the water of sprinkling was not cast upon him," for it contains nothing more than another repetition of the fundamental law that contact with the dead causes impurity and that his purification depends on the sprinkling of the water of the red cow. And again it repeats the matter a fourth time by concluding, "He shall remain impure; his impurity is still upon him," for it is obvious that he is impure after he became impure and did not purify himself. And this matter calls for explanation.

In order to resolve these matters by way of Mussar, we will mention what is brought in the holy seforim: that everything that exists in the "world" has its counterpart also in "time" and in the "soul." According to their words, since there is "death" in the "world," there must necessarily be its counterpart in the "soul." And what is its counterpart? A "wicked person"! For thus Chazal said (Berachos 18b): "The wicked, even in their lifetime, are called dead!" From this it follows that just as the dead person is impure and imparts

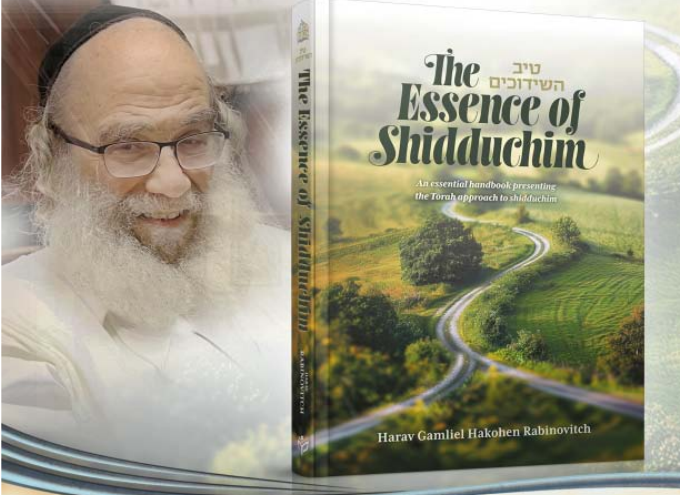
impurity, so too the wicked person is impure and imparts impurity. And what caused this for him? His sins! Every sin causes to rest upon the sinner a spirit of impurity, and through it he becomes sullied and impure. And just as the impurity that exists in the “world” distances a person from holiness and from the Mikdash, so too the impurity that is in the “soul” distances a person from HaKadosh Baruch Hu—the source of holiness—for every sin creates a barrier that separates between the sinner and his Creator, and causes that he has no desire for involvement in Torah and in the service of the Creator. He is literally like a fool who walks in darkness, without knowing what is incumbent upon him to do, and for what purpose he came into the world.


And just as the “impurity” in the “world” has a “purification,” through which one can again merit to draw close to holiness and to the Mikdash, so too the “impurity” in the “soul” has a “purification,” and that is “teshuvah.” Through it as well the barrier that separates between the sinner and his Creator is removed, and once again the eyes of his intellect will be illuminated to draw him close to holiness. However, this “purification,” which is called “teshuvah,” must be with complete regret from the depth of the heart, in such a manner that the Knower of hidden matters will testify about the penitent that he will not return to sin again (as the Rambam writes in Hilchos Teshuvah, Chapter 2, Halachah 2). And for this, great *שיעור דשמיא* is required. It is true that every repentance, according to its level, makes an impression upon the person, but the removal of every trace of the sin is only through the power of complete and true teshuvah.

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For this matter the Torah alluded when it repeated the law of the “purification from the impurity of the dead.” It came to hint to the law of the “purification from the impurity of the dead” within the “soul,” for this “purification” must often be done again and again until one merits complete purification and true repentance. Only the righteous and the pure of heart merit complete purification in one instance. Therefore, at first one instructs every person to purify himself, and afterward one says to him, “And if he does not purify himself,” meaning that he did not merit complete repentance and his soul is still not clear and pure, he should do teshuvah again. And so he should do time after time until they

will have mercy upon him from Heaven and will merit him with an *רצויה* teshuvah.

Since this is so, how good it is for a person that he should stand firmly on guard not to stumble from the outset in sin, for if he stumbles, *chas v'shalom*, he will not quickly merit to remove the ugly stain that he caused.

And the truth is that Chazal have already warned us about this when they said (Yoma 85b): “One who says, ‘I will sin and repent, I will sin and repent,’ they do not provide him the opportunity to repent.” And the commentators explained that they do not “assist” him from Heaven to return. For in order to merit the feelings of regret required for elevated repentance, one needs *שיעור דשמיא*, and this is only given to one who did not initially console himself with the “teshuvah” that he would do in the future.

And according to our words, we can explain an additional intention in their statement regarding one who says, “I will sin

and repent,” that “they do not provide him the opportunity to repent”—that he does not possess sufficient understanding of what the “teshuvah” is that is required in order to remove the impression of the sin completely, and how difficult it is to attain it. Only for this reason is he able to console himself with repentance. But one whose understanding is broad realizes that the sinner will not quickly merit such thoughts of repentance, and because of this he will fear sin and will not stumble quickly...

May Hashem be our help, that we should not stumble in any sin, and that we should merit pure and true teshuvah.

‘שיעור בהשגחה’

‘A lesson in hashgacha’

I sold the business, but the employees were not ready to give up the encouragement they had received from me in matters of Judaism and in all aspects of life. Therefore, they arranged with me that I would come to give them a lesson [shiur] once every two weeks. The shiur was delivered in the shul adjacent to the former business, and everyone was happy about the arrangement. I too was happy that the spiritual enterprise continued, as were the employees and the friends who always desire to strengthen themselves in avodas Hashem.

This week I arrived at the place to deliver a shiur, and the organizer approached me at my car even before I had managed to turn off the engine, and said apologetically that they did not have a key to the shul, because the person who was supposed to bring the key had a family celebration and was not in the area. They tried to call anyone who might have the key, but no such person was nearby.

They suggested that perhaps we could have the shiur in the garden or on one of the benches. Suddenly I remembered that there was a shul

across the street—perhaps it was open. We went there, but it was locked. Just before despair, I remembered that the Rav had given me, a few years earlier, the numerical value of the entrance code to the shul. We tried it, and with good fortune we succeeded in entering and delivered an especially successful shiur.

We prepared to leave the shul, and suddenly a piercing alarm sounded from within the shul. It turned out that the alarm had already been armed before we entered, but HaKadosh Baruch Hu delayed its activation until the end of the shiur. How could this be? It is not understood, but in practice we moved around inside, and people even arrived in the middle, and there was no alarm until we finished the shiur... This in itself gave tremendous encouragement to the participants of the shiur, who felt how important the shiur is in the eyes of Hashem!!!

Additionally, that place was more comfortable, and it was decided that from now on the shiur would be held in the new shul, in coordination with the gabbaim and with the alarm code.

ש.ש.

טיב ההשגחה

טיב המעשיות

The Holy Ohr HaChaim zt"l

In our parashah the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh reveals a wondrous matter and a profound secret concerning the death of the righteous.

וְהָיָה שֵׁם מִרְיָם: These are his holy words Miriam died there, and she - וְהִקְבֵּר שָׁם - was buried there (Bamidbar 20:1). It is necessary to understand the reason the pasuk emphasizes there. Chazal expounded (Moed Katan 28a) that they did not delay her burial, and this exposition is suggested by the clause, .and she was buried there

that he should study Ohr HaChaim together with the Rebbe."

The Western Lamp Is Extinguished

At the moment of the passing of the holy Ohr HaChaim in Yerushalayim, the Baal Shem Tov was reclining at the seudah shelishis in Mezhibuzh. After washing his hands and tasting bread, he suddenly announced, "The western lamp has been extinguished."

Later it became known that at that very moment, in Yerushalayim, the holy Ohr HaChaim departed from this world.

The Baal Shem Tov revealed to his close disciples how he knew this. There exists one great and awesome unification associated with the mitzvah of washing the hands, a secret that Heaven reveals to no creature in the world except to one tzaddik in each generation. Until that moment, this wondrous secret—hidden from the foundation of the world—had been known only to Rabbeinu, the holy Or HaChaim. Now, that exalted secret had been revealed to him as well. And through the intention of that awesome supernal unification in the mitzvah of washing the hands, he understood that the tzaddik had departed from the world—the western lamp had been extinguished. The Storm and the Lost Note

A remarkable account is brought in several holy works, demonstrating the awesome sanctity of Rabbeinu, the holy Ohr HaChaim zt"l.

One of his close associates, a wealthy and respected man whose livelihood had been abundant in the holy city of Yerushalayim, and who generously dispersed charity and supported the holy yeshivah of the Ohr HaChaim, suddenly experienced a reversal of fortune. He became impoverished—may Heaven have mercy—and was reduced to utter want.

In his distress, he came before his master and poured out his broken heart, lamenting the crushing poverty that pursued him relentlessly. With supplications he begged that the tzaddik act on his behalf and entreat in holiness that he no longer suffer the disgrace of hunger.

The holy Ohr HaChaim was filled with compassion for a Jewish soul. He sat, composed himself, and wrote a small note, folding it carefully many times, layer upon layer. He placed the note into the man's hand and commanded him with holy resolve:

"Hold tightly to this note. Go now directly to the Kosel, from which the Shechinah has never departed. Find a crevice between the stones into which you can insert

this note, place it there—and with Hashem's help, a great salvation will come to you."

The man rejoiced greatly at the promise of salvation. He clasped the holy note firmly in his hand as instructed and immediately hastened toward the Kosel, obeying the word of the Godly man.

On his short journey—from the home of the Ohr HaChaim to the Kosel—suddenly a violent storm wind arose in the streets. The man paid it little heed and hurried onward. But the wind intensified, growing stronger and more forceful, until he was compelled to struggle fiercely against it, advancing step by step in a mighty contest.

Suddenly, the storm tore the outer hat from his head. The man understood what was required of him and did not turn back to retrieve it. He pressed onward, his head covered only by his skullcap. His right hand clutched the note tightly, while his left hand held the skullcap firmly in place.

Yet as he drew closer to the Kosel, the storm raged even more violently. Suddenly, the skullcap itself was ripped from his head and swept away by the wind. That he could not tolerate—for he could not remain bareheaded. He ran after it to retrieve it, and in the chaos, his grip on the holy note loosened for a moment.

In that instant, the wind seized the note and tore it from his hand. Despite his desperate efforts to pursue it, the note was carried far away until it vanished from sight.

Astonishingly, at the very moment the note was torn from his hand, the storm ceased entirely—as though no tempest had ever existed.

Broken-hearted, the man returned to his master and wept bitterly over the loss of the note. The holy Ohr HaChaim was deeply distressed. He sighed profoundly and said: "It is a pity that the matter did not succeed. Apparently, Heaven decreed that this is the proper order for the rectification of your soul. Accept it with love."

Several days later, the note was found in the streets of Jerusalem. Written upon it, in the sacred handwriting of the Ohr HaChaim, were these holy words:

"My sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one—I beseech you with compassion to bestow good sustenance upon so-and-so, son of so-and-so."

Signed beneath was his holy name: "Chaim ben Atar." Then it became known throughout Yerushalayim how far-reaching was the greatness of his sanctity and his closeness to the Shechinah.

That sacred note remained preserved among the exalted elders of Jerusalem until the years of destruction during the upheaval of the world. Since then, it has disappeared and been concealed from the public.

Revelations and Visions in the Holy Ohr HaChaim

In his holy work Ohr HaChaim on the Torah—known in its first edition (Venice, 5502) by the name Orchos Chaim, as is well known—there are interwoven, in the sacred handwriting of Rabbeinu, many manifestations of splendor and supernal visions.

Such as what he wrote in his commentary to the beginning of Bereshis (Bereshis 1:1): "The heavens were opened, and I beheld visions of Hashem, Creator of the ends of the earth; I contemplated that which I was permitted to contemplate at the opening of this holy discourse, and I aroused the light from the east of the Torah."

It is likewise known and widely cited what he wrote in his commentary to Parashas Re'e'h (Devarim 15:7) regarding the arousal of the

It appears that since the pasuk mentions death, it was concerned for the honor of the righteous woman. For Chazal taught (Berachos 18a), "The righteous, even in their death, are called living." Therefore, the pasuk was precise in saying there—meaning that there is where her death occurred, but she herself did not remain among them; rather, she exists elsewhere, among the righteous.

For the righteous are likened before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, to precious pearls stored in a chest. When He desires one of them, He removes it from the chest and sets it into one of His adornments. And Chazal further expounded (Moed Katan, loc. cit.) by means of a gezerah shavah that she died there indicates that she too died by a Divine kiss. The Torah has seventy facets. The Baal Shem Tov and the Ohr HaChaim

It is well known and widely publicized that Rabbeinu, the light of seven days—the holy Baal Shem Tov zy"a—yearned intensely to ascend joyously to the Holy Land and to meet Rabbeinu, the Ohr HaChaim. He exerted himself greatly and undertook many difficult efforts toward this end, for he said that through their meeting together in love and pleasant fellowship, they would have the power to hasten the Redemption.

However, from Heaven he was restrained; the matter did not succeed, and the opportunity was lost.

Rabbeinu, the holy Ohr HaChaim, was not blessed with offspring. The tzaddikim said that he invested the entirety of his generative power into his holy sefarim. From this derives the well-established segulah among the House of Yisrael: that one who has not merited offspring should accept upon himself to study the Ohr HaChaim, for it possesses the power to open the wellspring and enable fruitfulness and multiplication in Klal Yisrael.

And as I have often stated regarding similar matters—various wondrous segulos for enduring offspring—it appears that they also possess a segulah for a fitting marriage match, in order that one may thereby fulfill the mitzvah, בְּרִוּוֹ - Be fruitful and multiply (Bereshis 1:28), for without marriage it is impossible to beget children.

The Unique Greatness of the Or HaChaim

In the holy work Imrei Pinchas (Shaar 5:55) by the holy Rav Pinchas of Koretz zt"l, it is written:

"There is nothing that can conceal itself as much as the Zohar, and at times also the Ohr HaChaim. This is not so with other books; until one finds within them something in which one perceives what Hakadosh Baruch Hu requires—one must search greatly."

And further there (5:72): "In the name of the Rebbe: all books composed within seventy years are of no comparison—except for the books of the Rebbe of Polnoye, of which he said there are none like them in the world, and except for the book Ohr HaChaim."

"Once, when he was in the holy community of Tcherin, he said: I see a great light in this city. He asked whether the sefer Ohr HaChaim was present there, and it was found that one individual possessed a Chumash with the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim. It illuminated the entire city. And he said that he had publicized the Ohr HaChaim as mentioned."

"And once, when the son of the Rebbe fell ill, he accepted upon himself to study one page of Ohr HaChaim each day, from the large communal Chumashim of the community of Zolkiew."

And in the holy sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh (Torah 27), it states: "The Rebbe of Sochatchov zt"l (author of Avnei Nezer) said that his father-in-law, the Rebbe of Kotzk, told him not to engage in or study aggadic material among the later authorities. When the Rebbe was still a youth, the holy gaon Rav Yitzchak advised his father

hearts of Yisrael to draw near the coming of our righteous Moshiach, and he concludes in this fiery golden language: "One should evaluate in his mind that the deed is directed toward this ultimate purpose—that of the Moshiach of Hashem, whose name is Life."

It is well known that in the printed edition of Shklov from the year 5541, this sacred expression was omitted. It was related that the omission was made by the printer named Asher, through whose efforts the book was published. When this omission was shown to the holy Rav Pinchas of Koretz zt"l, he pointed out to them an additional error that had occurred in that edition, in the words of the Ohr HaChaim in Parashas Naso (Bamidbar 5:28), where the sotah swears that she was not defiled at all—neither by this man nor by another. In that edition, however, the printer mistakenly wrote "neither by Asher." In time, his disgrace became publicly known.

The Testimony of the Chida and the Divrei Chaim His holy disciple, Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai zt"l, testified about him in his work Shem Hagedolim, writing as follows: "And we have heard that now in Poland they esteem him greatly, and it has been printed two more times. This was aroused through our holy and pious master Rav Yisrael the Baal Shem Tov, who proclaimed the greatness of the soul of Rabbeinu the Ohr HaChaim.

And in the holy responsa of Maran, the gaon and tzaddik Rav Chaim of Tzanz zt"l, (Divrei Chaim Yoreh De'ah, vol. 2:105), he wrote as follows:

"Regarding your claim—that according to responses from the great ones of our generation, ruach hakodesh has entirely ceased—I do not believe that this emerged from the mouths of our teachers.... Who knows what that corrupt deceiver wrote to them? The truth, however, remains firm: even in our times, among the sages of truth who do not incline after materiality, there are those who possess divine inspiration, as explained in the Guide (chapter 36) and explicitly by the Ramban."

"Therefore, the author of Ohr HaChaim, whose soul is stored in the supernal treasures, certainly composed his book with ruach hakodesh. Yet he was not alone; rather, any author—even in our generation—if worthy of it, composes his work with ruach hakodesh, meaning that his wisdom accords with the truth of the Torah. As the Gemara states regarding Rabbi Eviatar. So too wrote the Tummim, that one cannot claim 'kim li' against the Shulchan Aruch, because its words were written with ruach hakodesh.

"Therefore, a teacher who denies the ruach hakodesh of the Ohr HaChaim is an apikores [non-believer], for he does not believe in the great ones of the generation who testified that he was worthy ruach hakodesh. Such a teacher denies the very principle of ruach hakodesh and mocks the words of the Gemara. You acted properly in not leaving your sons in his hands—may your strength be blessed for this. However, regarding the teacher's wages, I cannot issue a ruling in the absence of the opposing party without seeing his conduct, for perhaps this was an error. In this matter, you may rely upon the teacher of instruction in your community, and peace be unto you."

Thus are the sharp and fiery words of Maran, the Divrei Chaim, in that exalted responsum.

At the Tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai Rabbeinu, the holy Ohr HaChaim, ascended

together with a select group of his sacred disciples to the holy resting place of the Divine tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai zt"l, at the holy site of Meron.

After they had toiled and exhausted themselves greatly along the difficult journey, riding upon donkeys, as soon as the Ohr HaChaim saw that they had reached the descent of the holy mountain of Meron, he forcefully cast himself from the donkey to the ground and began to climb with his own holy hands and feet, walking upon the earth. He wept bitterly, sobbing with copious tears: how could a person like himself, fashioned of mere matter, approach the holy sanctuary of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, when the Shechinah and the entire heavenly retinue are present there in his abode? Along the entire path he groaned and sighed, exclaiming: Who can approach the place of that supernal chariot which has descended here, to this most distinguished site?

Upon reaching the holy and pure cave, a tremendous awe fell upon him. All the disciples around him, seeing the magnitude of his fear and singular devotion, found their teeth chattering one against another. In this great dread—the revelation of the Shechinah—they entered the holy chamber.

A Defense of Yisrael in Our Generation

And now I wish, at this very moment, to present a plea in defense of Yisrael before Heaven.

If we, in our present generation—a generation of orphans of orphans—after thousands of years of bitter exile, of concealment within concealment, when all vision has been sealed in terrible darkness, and we neither see nor feel these awe-inspiring revelations—yet nevertheless, we are believers, children of believers. Though we grope in darkness, we believe with simple faith in the great and awesome power of the Divine tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai zt"l, and in the immense sanctity of the place of his glorious rest. Year after year we come and ascend in multitudes to prostrate ourselves upon his pure grave.

Surely, then, this simple faith burning in our hearts today is not inferior to the awesome tefillos of the earlier generations, for whom the heavens were open. We see how much effort and exertion Yisrael invests today in order to merit ascending to his holy resting place—especially on the day of his hillulah, Lag BaOmer—and particularly in recent years, when the difficulties involved astonishingly increase each year, as is well known. Even from across the seas, many stream to the place of our soul's longing, abandoning all their affairs, in order to merit praying with simple and pure faith in the power of the exalted righteous.

Surely and certainly, their tefillos are worthy of being accepted before the King who hears prayer, just as in the earlier generations, when great and wondrous salvations were wrought here—according to the expression of the righteous of the Gemara: "it is worth relying on Rabbi Shimon in a time of distress."

The Greatness of Removing Judgments

There is a well-known account concerning the holy Rav Shlomke of Zvhil zt"l. Once, as he was walking along the road with his sacred attendant, the righteous Rav Eliyahu Rotte zt"l, they were strolling together through the streets of the city. Rav Shlomke pointed to a certain man and said that harsh judgments rested upon that person—Rachmana litzlan.

His faithful attendant, Rav Eliyahu, asked him: From where does the Rebbe perceive this? The holy Rebbe replied: This is a simple matter; one does not require a lofty or exalted spiritual level in order to see this upon him.

Rav Eliyahu then asked: If it is considered a "simple matter" to see that judgments rest upon a person,

what, then, is a "great matter" that requires a special and elevated level?

The Rebbe answered with the wisdom of Hashem that dwelled within him: The great matter is to remove all the judgments from that person.

And behold, with siyatta diShmaya I found a wondrous corroboration of this idea, explicitly stated in the holy Ohr HaChaim in Parashas Pinchas, on the pasuk (Bemidbar 25:11): הָשִׁיב אֶת חֲרֹתֵי מַעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - He turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael. After wrath had already gone forth against Israel and judgments rested upon them, Pinchas, through his holy deeds, removed and lifted the judgments from them and turned back the wrath of the Borei Yisbarach from upon Bnei Yisrael. Concerning this, the Or HaChaim concludes: "And this is a great praise."

Torah and Livelihood

An avreich, a devoted Torah scholar, once came before me and complained that his livelihood was not forthcoming. He argued forcefully that it was utterly impossible to both study Torah and earn a living, claiming that these two pursuits stood in absolute contradiction to one another. He was deeply confused and distressed over this matter.

I opened before him the awe-inspiring work of Rabbeinu, the holy Ohr HaChaim, on the Torah, in Parashas Ki Tzetzei (Devarim 22:13), where he elaborates at length, in the sweetness of his sacred language and with remarkable clarity, on this very issue. I instructed him to study that passage carefully—again and again—until all doubts and confusion would be removed from his mind, and he would merit to see abundant blessing and spacious livelihood.

We shall cite here a small selection of his pure words, in brief:

"כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה וְבָא אֵלֶיהָ וּשְׂנֵאָהּ - When a man takes a wife... (Devarim 22:13). The Torah speaks concerning human nature, even the sons of man who turn their faces away from the Torah, saying that the day is too short for what one must exert himself upon for sustenance.

"Of them the pasuk says: כִּי יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה - When a man takes a wife—this refers to the Torah, which is betrothed. וְבָא אֵלֶיהָ - And he comes to her—for the light of Torah already shone upon them at Mount Sinai, and they received the Two Tablets of the Covenant. וּשְׂנֵאָהּ - And he hates her — meaning that he does not desire to give his wife her proper due. When one comes to reprove him, asking: Why do you despise the wife of your youth? he responds that Torah neither sustains nor provides livelihood, and that he needs sustenance. He also sees no sign of blessing through its study; even if he engages in it, the gates of good livelihood are not opened for him. On the contrary, he observes that all those who distance themselves from it and do not consider it at all have homes filled with every good thing. This is the meaning of (ibid. 14), וְשָׂם לָהּ עֲלֵילֹת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹצִיא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע וְאָמַר אֶת הָאִשָּׁה, וְשָׂם לָהּ עֲלֵילֹת דְּבָרִים וְהוֹצִיא עָלֶיהָ שֵׁם רָע - 'He places accusations upon her and spreads an evil name about her, saying, This woman I took...'

"The pasuk informs us that Hakadosh Baruch Hu—who is called אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה - the father of the maiden, that is, Klal Yisrael, will demand the honor of the Torah before the Great Court. This is the meaning of, וְלָקַח אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה - Then the father of the maiden and her mother shall take.... And this is what is stated in the Zohar, that in the future Hakadosh Baruch Hu will demand the honor of the Torah; as stated in the Mishnah (Avos 6:2), אוֹיְלָהֶם לְבָרִיוֹת - 'Woe to them, to the people, for their disgrace of the Torah...'

These are his holy words. One should study there carefully how Rabbeinu, the Ohr HaChaim, arranged the proper path of repentance in this matter, so that a person may once again merit all goodness and blessing.

May his merit protect us and all Klal Yisrael—Amen.