

Parashas
Behar-Bechukosai

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כ"ב אייר תשפ"ו

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י"ל ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הר"צ

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רבינובין שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

טיב הפרשה

שמירת שבת - קיומה וסגולתה

טיב המערכות

I will turn to you פניתי אליכם

A line of children are standing in line by the teacher to receive a treat after they learned well. Each child, in turn, stretches out his hand and receives a candy. And behold, when it is the turn of one of the children, the teacher says to him: "You should wait to the side." The child is surprised; he in fact learned so well—according to his understanding he deserves even more than one candy—but he does not understand why the teacher is not giving him at least one candy like everyone else. At the end, after everyone has received candies, the teacher calls him and says to him affectionately: "My dear student, you learned better than everyone, and therefore I wish to give you from the cabinet something greater, something that does not fit into the small candy boxes..."

In our parashah, the Creator Yisbarach, promises us (26:3): 'אם - "If you walk in My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them," oh, how many blessings... but one blessing is not sufficiently understood (26:9): 'ופניתי אליכם' - "and I will turn to you." We must understand what this "turning" is. Rashi explains: "I will turn away from all My concerns to pay your reward." And Rashi brings a Midrash Toras Kohanim 2:5): "They gave a parable—what is the matter comparable to? To a king who hired many workers, and there was one worker who worked with him for many days. The workers entered to receive their wages, and that worker entered with them. He said to him: 'My son, I will turn to you. These many who worked with me a small amount of work—I give them a small wage. But you—I am destined to make a great accounting with you.' Thus, Israel in this world seek their reward from before the Omnipresent, and the Omnipresent says to Israel: 'My children, I will turn to you. These nations of the world performed with Me a small amount of work, and I give them a small reward. But you—a great accounting I am destined to make with you.' Therefore, it is stated: 'and I will turn to you.'"

We live in this world and see the successes of the wicked, and this matter can chalilah, break us. We, after all, try so much to do the will of the Creator; we are occupied from morning until night with Torah and mitzvos, and behold, the wicked live for themselves in tranquility, whereas the Torah and those who study it are pursued and trampled every day. And this question has already been asked in the Gemara (Berachos 7a): why is there a righteous person for whom it is bad, and a wicked person for whom it is good? To this the Creator answers us: "My children, wait a little and I will turn to you. Only let Me finish paying the nations their reward, and then I have with you a great accounting!" Literally, just a little more.

Tiv HaTorah - Bechukosai

Observance of Shabbos – its fulfillment and its virtue

וְעִשְׂתֶּם אֶת חֻקֵּי וְאֶת מִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ וְעִשְׂתֶּם אֹתָם וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם עַל הָאָרֶץ לָכֶטֶח: וְנָתַתְּהָ הָאָרֶץ פְּרִיָּה וְאִכְלֶתֶם לְשִׁבְעָה וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם לָכֶטֶח עָלֶיהָ: (כה, יח - יט)

You shall perform My statutes, and keep My ordinances and perform them, and you shall dwell securely on the land. The land will give its fruit, and you will eat to satiety, and you will dwell securely upon it. (25:18-19)

Behold, the word "וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם" ("and you shall dwell") has the same letters as "יום שבת" ("day of Shabbos"), and there is a hint in this regarding the observance of Shabbos—that in its merit a person will merit "and you shall dwell securely upon the land"—that he will be the one who sits over physicality, meaning that he will be the master over his material matters, and not be drawn after them. For Chazal said (Shabbos 118b): "Anyone who observes Shabbos according to its laws—even if he worships idolatry like the generation of Enosh—is forgiven." And after he merits forgiveness, behold he is a "completely righteous person," and Chazal said (Avos 3:12) that "the righteous—their heart is in their control." If so, it is fitting that he too be given that power to be master over his heart, so that he will not be drawn after the materiality that his heart desires.

And the Torah continues and says that after a person merits to elevate himself through the power of Shabbos and to be master over his heart, he will prepare himself to be a vessel that holds blessing. And aside from the spiritual abundance that will be drawn to him, he will also merit material abundance, and it will be fulfilled in him: "and the land will give its fruit." And as it is brought in the Zohar HaKadosh (Part II, 88a) that "all blessings above and below depend on the seventh day." And the reason that even material abundance depends on the observance of Shabbos is because as long as a person is inflamed after his desires, even if he is worthy of abundance and the fulfillment of his needs by virtue of the mitzvos that he has fulfilled, from Heaven they are concerned to fill his storehouses completely, lest this abundance become a cause to draw him into material desire that distances a person from his Creator. However, one who observes Shabbos merits to be master over his desires, and even if his abundance increases, he will fulfill "and you will eat to satiety"—that he will not chalilah, eat for his pleasure, but rather in the measure necessary for his satisfaction, as the posuk states (Mishlei 13:25): 'צדיק אוכל לשובע נפשו' - "A righteous person eats to the satisfaction of his soul." And then there is no reason to withhold any of the abundance that is fitting for him.

We find another hint to this in the statement of Chazal (Shabbos 118a): "Anyone who delights in the Shabbos is given the desires of his heart," and it can be explained thus: "Anyone who delights in the Shabbos"—anyone about whom it can be testified that he delights in the Shabbos, since during the weekdays he is not drawn at all after pleasures, and only on Shabbos is he seen to delight—this is a sign that he intends for the honor of Shabbos. And since he is master over his desires, he is fit that his wishes be fulfilled, and indeed "they are given the desires of his heart."

And the Torah continues and says: "וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם"—if afterward he will observe another Shabbos properly [and as mentioned above, that the word "וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם" has the letters of "יום שבת"], then he will merit "לְבִטָּח עָלֶיהָ"—to "security," which brings one to tranquility and rest, and to an additional "ascent" in spirituality and materiality, and his tranquility and his abundant good will be considered like a "semblance

‘הזבל שלו האוצר שלי’

‘His garbage is my treasure’

I work for a company as a truck driver, and I have an agreement with the owner that I am permitted, during my free time, to do small transport jobs with the truck in order to earn additional income.

Someone arranged with me to transport an oven from one neighborhood in Yerushalayim to another neighborhood. I asked for one hundred fifty shekels for the transport—a truly charitable price, when the price is a minimum of 400 shekels. I arrived at the address, and while the oven was on the ramp of the truck, it slipped and fell onto the sidewalk, and glass scattered in all directions...

We checked the damages and saw that the glass of the door was damaged. We called a technician to check the cost, and he estimated the repair cost at one thousand shekels. The woman had already paid me the transport fee; she said that later she would consult with her husband and we would see what to do.

I was very broken. All in all, I only wanted to add a little money to the support of my household, and instead of earning a few extra coins, I came out with a loss!!!

At night I arrived at my regular shiur and asked the Rav after the shiur what the halacha is in such a case. The Rav ruled that I must pay the damage in full.

I listened to the regular shiur in Shaar HaBitachon, and I arrived home happy and with a good heart. I said at home that this is my rectification, and I have no reason to walk around upset. If HaKadosh Baruch Hu brought me this loss, then everything is for the good!!!

The next day I called the woman and told her that the Rav ruled that I must pay her, and that I will take care to pay promptly. The woman felt uncomfortable and said that she wants first to consult with her husband how much money they want, because perhaps it is possible to obtain it more cheaply second-hand.

That morning, at one of the intersections, instead of turning right, I continued straight. After a few meters I saw an oven thrown at the side of the trash. I parked on the side and saw that it was exactly the same oven and the door was intact. I removed the door and brought the door to their home, I installed the door on their oven, and her husband and I rejoiced with tremendous joy over the miracle that HaKadosh Baruch Hu did for us, for they also did not feel comfortable that I should pay them from my own pocket...

I saw the statement “הבוטח בה’ חסד יסובבנו” – “one who trusts in Hashem, kindness will surround him” in its simple meaning!!! ש.ה.

of redemption.” And this matter of the reward is learned from what is brought in the Gemara (Shabbos 119b): “Yerushalayim was destroyed only because they desecrated the Shabbos”—“desecration of Shabbos” caused Israel a terrible exile filled with burdens and worries, and the rectification for this is the opposite—to observe the Shabbos, as Chazal said (ibid. 118b): “If only Israel would observe two Shabbosim, they would be immediately redeemed.” However, this observance needs to be done by all of Israel, as is precise in their wording: “If only they would observe,” etc.—in the plural form. However, even if an individual person merits the observance of two Shabbosim, he is at least fitting for a certain aspect of “redemption,” and much goodness, security, and tranquility are bestowed upon him, which are the opposite of burdens and worries—the aspect of exile.

However, in order to merit observing Shabbos properly, one must be proficient in all the laws of Shabbos, because otherwise he will stumble without paying attention in one of the labors [melachos] of Shabbos, as the “Mishnah Berurah” wrote in his introduction to “Hilchos Shabbos”: “And the Gaon, the author of ‘Urim VeTumim,’ already testified about us in his book ‘Ya’aros Devash,’ that it is impossible in reality for one to be saved from a prohibition of Shabbos if he does not learn all the laws thoroughly, very thoroughly.” And see there further, that he brings several illustrations of very common pitfalls among those who are not well-versed in the laws of Shabbos.

Those who have not learned the laws of Shabbos are not aware of the severity of it, and it is fitting to arouse their attention to the magnitude of their stumbling. For if chalilah, a person would stumble in one of the forbidden relations in the Torah, he would from then on be considered as one of the worst and lowest among Israel, and immediately they would shake him off and distance him, and outside the camp of Israel would be his dwelling. And if one who stumbles in forbidden relations is so despised, all the more so one who stumbles in the prohibition of Shabbos must be extremely despised, for the punishment for forbidden relations is strangulation, and the punishment for desecration of Shabbos is stoning...

This is what the “Mishnah Berurah” wrote in his aforementioned introduction regarding the severity of the sin of “desecration of Shabbos,” and this is his language: “And see the severity of the sin that there is in the prohibition of desecration of Shabbos, for it is known that there are several categories of punishments for sins: there are matters that when a person transgresses them it is only a positive commandment prohibition; more severe than this are sins that have a negative commandment; more severe than this are sins that have death at the hands of Heaven; more severe than this are sins that have the punishment of kareis; more severe than this are those that have death at the hands of man, which is strangulation; above this are those whose punishment is killing by the sword; above this are those whose death is by burning; above all of them are those whose death is by stoning, for it is the most severe of the deaths.” End quote.

Since this is so, a person should not give rest to his soul until he feels that he knows all the laws of Shabbos thoroughly, and he should review them and repeat them to himself at every available time, and he should take to heart the severity of the sin of desecration of Shabbos. For in the time when the Beis HaMikdash stood, when a person sinned inadvertently, he was obligated to bring a “Chatas” – “sin-offering,” and sometimes this involved great effort, for when his place of residence was distant, he had to leave all his affairs for several weeks and go up to Yerushalayim in order to bring his offering. And when he came to Yerushalayim, to the Beis HaMikdash, he needed to be embarrassed and to tell the Kohen his sin and to confess it, and then the Levi'im would play melodies that greatly broke his heart in order to bring him to repentance, and sometimes this act as well involved much effort until he came to a true broken heart. And all of this suffering is only for one inadvertent sin... and if this is the case, how fitting it is to be very meticulous and very careful in the laws of Shabbos.

Additionally, we must know that if one is lazy in the study of the laws of Shabbos, even if we stumble only inadvertently, this is considered intentional, chas v'shalom, for “for a careless misinterpretation is considered as a willful transgression” (Avos 4:10), and who knows what his rectification is...

And in the merit of studying the laws of Shabbos properly, we will merit the observance of Shabbos and all the blessings that are drawn through the power of Shabbos.

Although we have already spoken about this yom hilulah in our modest column, the wellspring has not yet run dry; for in the manner of Rabbeinu, it is constantly renewed and strengthened with fresh and sweet sketches. Accordingly, we have arranged here several remarkable tales, both new and old, organized and interwoven around a number of mishnayos from Pirkei Avos studied during these Shabbosos.

May Hashem grant that these words enter our hearts and souls, so that we may walk in the way of the good and in the paths of the righteous—so that he may serve as a meilitz yosher for us, for good and for blessing, Amen.

מֹשֶׁה קָבַל תּוֹרַת מִסִּינַי, וּמִסִּנַּי הָיוּ שֶׁנֶּשְׂעָה לְזִקְנֵי, וְזִקְנֵי לְבָנָיִם, וּבָנָיִם מִסִּנַּי לְאֶנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה – “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua; Yehoshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly.” (1:1)

The holy Rebbe, Rav Shlomka of Zhvil zt”l, received his Torah and the sanctity of his wondrous avodas Hashem from his holy father and grandfather, generation after generation, tracing back to the first Rebbe of this golden chain—the holy Maggid, Rav Yechiel Michel of Zlotshov zt”l, the faithful disciple of Maran, the Or Shiv’as HaYamim, the holy Baal Shem Tov zt”l. He transmitted his extraordinary measure of holiness to his holy sons, and they to their sons and their descendants, until that exalted flame of holiness reached the soul of our Rabbeinu, the holy master of this hilulah.

It is known that after the passing of the holy grandfather, Rav Michel of Zlotshov, when he ascended heavenward in a storm, a proclamation resounded with great tumult throughout the upper worlds: “Render honor to the holy visage.” As it is written in the holy Zohar (2:199a): כִּד נִטְלִי לִיה מִבֵּיתָהּ לְבִי קִרְבִּי, בְּדִין: מִכְרָדִי עָלוּ. אִי אִיהוּ זָכָא מִכְרָדִי עָלִיהּ וְאִמְרִי, הַבּוּ יִקְרָ לְדִיקְנָא דְמִלְכָא, יִבְא שְׁלוֹם יִחוּדוֹ עַל מִשְׁכַּבּוֹתֵם הֲלָקָר נִכְחוּ: מָאָ לָן, דְּכָתִיב (שִׁם נח, ח) «וְהָלַךְ לִפְנֵיךָ דְּקָדֵךְ עֲבָד כְּבוֹד ה' וְאַסְפְּרִי» עֲבָד. – “When they take him from his home to the place of burial, then they proclaim concerning him. If he is meritorious, they proclaim and say: ‘Render honor to the image of the King; He shall enter into peace, they shall rest upon their beds, each one who walks in his uprightness (Yeshayah 57:2). From where do we know? For it is written: And your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of Hashem shall gather you in (ibid. 58:8).”

Immediately he ascended and was elevated, and in that bond he was bound to his proper place in the supernal Gan Eden. Being among the great tzaddikim of the generation, he was appointed as a judge in the Heavenly court, among the exalted righteous who dwell in the palace of the King and sit foremost in the sovereignty of the supernal tribunal.

However, due to the intensity of his fiery holiness and his extraordinary separation, having never blemished in the slightest the sanctity of the holy covenant, he judged these transgressions with great severity. He could not comprehend how a Jew—created in the holy and pure image of Hashem—could defile his soul with such impurities. Therefore, it became necessary to remove him from this position in order to grant merit to Yisrael.

Indeed, his descendant, the Rebbe Reb Shloimele of Zhvil, the master of this hilulah, who was a direct descendant of that supernal flame, likewise cleaved deeply to that exalted

טיב המעשיות

The Holy Rebbe, Rav Shlomo (Shlomka) of Zhvil zy”a

On the occasion of the great yahrzeit of the holy Rebbe, Rav Shlomo [son of the holy Rebbe Rav Mordechai] of Zhvil, zy”a, which falls on the 26 Iyar — Yesod shebe’Yesod, we present here a selection of faithful pearls gathered from many sacred sefarim and holy talks of Maran Rabbeinu shlit”a, concerning the master of this hilula and his profound influence upon the Holy City of Yerushalayim, may it be rebuilt speedily.

holiness. It is well known and widely publicized the magnitude of his sanctity—how he guarded it with faithful vigilance and extraordinary care.

In his old age, toward the end of his days, he fell ill and suffered terrible pain and afflictions. All the physicians unanimously ruled that he must undergo an urgent life-saving procedure [catheterization]. Yet, in his supreme holiness and ascetic separation, he firmly refused to undergo this treatment. Even when they implored him repeatedly, explaining that it would ease his severe suffering, he stood steadfast with great strength in guarding his holiness, and did not consent under any circumstances that they touch his pure body. Despite groaning and crying out from his pain, he declared firmly to Dr. Wallach z”l, the director of Shaarei Tzedek Hospital, who treated him with devotion, that as a seventh-generation guardian of the holy covenant—tracing back to his holy grandfather Rav Michel of Zlotshov—he would not allow himself to be touched, chas veshalom.

His faithful friend, the holy Rebbe Rav Ahar’leh Roth, zy”a, author of Shomer Emunim, also composed a lengthy letter to him, filled with reasoning, pleas, and entreaties, urging him to agree to the treatment due to the obligation of saving life, for the generation needed him.

Yet all this was to no avail, and he passed away in his illness on that exalted and sanctified day, so fitting for the tzaddik of this hilulah: “Yesod shebe’Yesod.”

On the day of his passing (6 Iyar 5706), shortly before the time of the moment of the soul’s departure—which occurred very late at night—that exalted tzaddik, Rav Ahar’leh zy”a, came to his home to take leave of him and to recite with the assembled the pesukim of unification in holiness and purity.

Although it was the custom of that tzaddik, Rav Ahar’leh, to be exceedingly careful to pray before midnight, maintaining fixed learning session in his great beis midrash—after which they would pray with a large assembly and great fervor—nevertheless, on that great day, being occupied with the sacred avodah of “ashkavtei d’Rebbi” at that time, he was compelled to delay his tefillah until after midnight.

As Chazal testified in Perek Ha’nosei (Kesubos 103b) regarding the greatness of that favorable time, the ra’ava d’ra’avin, as it states:

“On the day of Rabbi’s passing, a heavenly voice went forth and declared: Whoever was present at the passing of Rabbi is destined for life in the

World to Come.” Rashi explains: “The day of his passing—his day of death.” [See also the view of the Ritz Gaon zt”l, in his sefer Me’ah She’arim, that this refers to the day of the hilulah at the end of the twelve months.]

It is known that on that very day, with the passing of that tzaddik from the world, a great atonement was effected through the death of the righteous. On that very same day, World War II came to its conclusion, together with all the terrible events of the Holocaust, as that tzaddik gave over his soul for the benefit and atonement of Klal Yisrael.

[Approximately one year later, on 6 Nissan 5707, his companion—the holy Rebbe Rav Ahar’leh—passed away and joined him.]

יֹסִי בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צִדְקָה אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵיתְךָ בֵּית וַעַד לַחֲכָמִים, וְהָיוּ מִתְאַבְּקִים בְּעֶפֶר רַגְלֵיהֶם, וְהָיוּ נֹשְׂתֵה בְצִמָּא – “Yosei ben Yo’ezer of Tzreidah would say: Let your home be a meeting place for the Sages; and sit amid the dust of their feet; and drink their words with thirst.” (1:4)

The home of the holy Rebbe, Rav Shlomka of Zhvil zy”a, was literally a “meeting place for the Sages.” He rendered his home entirely open to all who sought entry, and many distinguished individuals among the elevated residents of Yerushalayim would gather at his table. Likewise, poor wayfarers and those burdened by hardship found a comfortable and welcoming place in his home. He would always ensure that good food was prepared to satisfy the soul of every Jew—whoever wished to partake would come and eat. In those days, extreme poverty prevailed in Yerushalayim, and the government distributed loaves of bread to each family in strictly measured portions, with exact rationing during those difficult times.

One day, a single loaf of bread arrived at the home of the tzaddik, carefully measured and apportioned according to weight for the needs of his household, which included several of his children and grandchildren who lived with him. At that very moment, however, many guests were seated at his table, as was his sacred custom. The tzaddik instructed that they count how many people were presently seated around his holy table, and they found there were twenty-two individuals.

The Rebbe firmly directed that the loaf designated for himself and his family be divided into twenty-two precisely equal portions, and that each of the guests be given an equal share. He did not agree under any circumstances to reserve a larger portion for his own family, explaining that all these guests were also “his people” (meine menschen), and they too deserved an equal share just like members of his own household.

Beyond this, it was well known that every Erev Shabbos he would distribute money to needy families for their Shabbos needs.

The gaon and tzaddik Rav Shimon Hillel Schlesinger zt”l, related that he was once present in the home of the tzaddik during such a distribution. On that occasion, a young man arrived and stood in line as well, requesting financial assistance for purchasing provisions for the approaching Shabbos.

To the astonishment of all present, the tzaddik refused to give him his portion. Not only that, but he spoke to him sharply: “This chalukah is not for you! You are still a young man, and you possess the strength to earn your own livelihood. This distribution is not

intended for people like you. Go to work and provide for your household yourself!” And with that, the tzaddik dismissed him empty-handed. This entire scene was a great wonder in the eyes of Rav Shimon Hillel. All those present were astonished to hear such words from the tzaddik, whose way it was to draw close every individual and to assist anyone in need without any demands or investigations.

Rabbi Shimon Hillel therefore approached the tzaddik and presented his question: Why had he rejected this man so forcefully? What had he seen that warranted denying him his Shabbos needs? What was his wrongdoing or sin that he should be shamed and dismissed in such a manner before all?

The Rebbe responded with a pleasant countenance and revealed to him, gently, the underlying matter: “Know,” said the Rebbe, “that this individual has long been struggling within himself whether to go out to work and earn a livelihood, for it was more ‘convenient’ for him to receive his bread from the various charitable distributions in Yerushalayim. He reasoned that since he could benefit from all these forms of support, why should he work?”

“Therefore, when he came to my home today, I sought to extricate him from the entanglement of his doubts. Through the words I spoke to him, his question has now been resolved and his uncertainties clarified, so that he will know clearly how he must act in his world.”

יוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים אומר, יהי ביתך פתוח לְיוֹסֵי בֶן יוֹחָנָן, וְיִהְיֶה עֲנִיִּים בְּבֵיתְךָ — *“Yosei ben Yochanan of Yerushalayim would say: Let your home be open wide, and let the poor be members of your household.” (1:5)*

In his personal conduct, together with his family, the holy Rebbe Rav Shloimele sufficed with the bare minimum, fulfilling within himself in a most exemplary manner the teaching, “and let the poor be members of your household.” The level of histapkus b’m’e’at [being satisfied with the bare minimum] that he practiced in his home was extraordinary. Even simple chairs were not to be found in his house; they would regularly sit on wooden crates—those used for apples, oranges, and other produce—which they collected from the streets of Yerushalayim. Rav Mottele Tzainwort zt”l, related that he once participated in a Melaveh Malkah meal held by the Rebbe in his home, as was his regular custom every Motza’ei Shabbos to arrange his holy table in honor of Melaveh Malkah. Many guests and poor individuals would come to his sacred courtyard to partake and revive their spirits with the sanctified foods.

The Rebbe himself, who conducted himself with extreme simplicity like an ordinary person, distancing himself entirely from any external trappings of adonus, and who firmly refused that any form of honor be accorded to him whatsoever, would sit among the guests like one of them. He had no fixed place, certainly not at the head of the table; rather, wherever he found an empty spot, he would sit together with his many guests in brotherly companionship.

Rav Mottele relates that in the middle of the meal, the tzaddik rose from his place to bring something needed for the guests. At that very moment, a poor man entered the house, very hungry, seeking a place to sit and eat. Seeing the now-vacant seat where the Rebbe had been sitting, and unaware that it belonged to the Rebbe, he simply took the seat and began

to eat.

When the tzaddik returned and noticed that his place had been taken, he looked around to see whether any space remained at the table—but not a single seat was available. The Rebbe did not hesitate in the slightest, nor did any sign of distress or disappointment appear on his face. At first, he remained standing, continuing to serve the guests in all their needs.

Afterward, he went over to a corner where he found an empty wooden crate, took it, overturned it, and brought it near the table. He then sat down naturally on the crate at the side, regarding this with no sense of diminished honor whatsoever.

Rav Mottele testified that the sight of such profound humility and utter simplicity left a deep impression upon him, instilling within his heart powerful feelings of humility and lowliness that stirred his soul for many months.

On another occasion, a distinguished guest happened to visit his home—a wealthy and prominent benefactor who had come from America to the Holy Land, and who entered the Rebbe’s abode to receive his blessing.

Upon entering and witnessing the stark poverty and neglect in the Rebbe’s home, his heart filled with compassion for such hardship. He resolved to “surprise” the Rebbe’s household. He went to a fine furniture store and purchased an entire set of high-quality furnishings—the finest and most elegant available: a large expandable table and luxurious upholstered chairs with wide armrests, truly magnificent, befitting royalty. He arranged for the entire delivery to be sent to the Rebbe’s home. When the delivery arrived, the holy Rebbe immediately grasped what stood before him and at once understood why it had been sent from Heaven. Turning to the deliveryman, he said: “Very good that you have come. These furnishings must be delivered to the home of so-and-so at such-and-such a place...”

The Rebbe knew precisely of a certain family in Yerushalayim who were in desperate need of such furniture and lacked the means to acquire it. And thus, he sent it with full honor directly to their home.

רַבֵּן שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאל אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, עַל הַדִּין וְעַל הָאֱמֶת וְעַל הַשְּׁלוֹם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אֱמֶת וְשָׁלוֹם שְׁלֹשׁ שִׁפְטֵי בְּשַׁעֲרֵיכֶם — *“Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel would say: Upon three things the world stands—upon justice, upon truth, and upon peace, as it states, Truth and a judgment of peace shall you render in your gates. [Zechariah 8:16]” (1:18)*

The holy Rebbe, Rav Shloimele of Zvhil zt”l, once requested of the gaon and tzaddik Rav Aharon Polansky, the Rav of Teplik zt”l, to establish with him a fixed session of in-depth study as chavrusa in the Tur and Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat, focusing on several simanim within a particular subject that he wished to clarify together with him. The Rav of Teplik gladly accepted the proposal, and the two lions sat together day after day, toiling in the holy Torah with great exertion and effort, in the beis midrash in the Beis Yisrael neighborhood of Yerushalayim.

One day, in the course of their learning, they merited, with Divine assistance, to clarify a particularly complex halachah, fraught with many intricacies and complications. After extensive deliberation, weighing the arguments back and forth, they arrived—be’siygata diShmaya—at a clear and lucid ruling, pure as a garment, the matter shining with clarity as though given at Sinai.

Suddenly, the Rav of Teplik began to tremble and turned pale as lime; fear and trembling seized him,

and he became greatly agitated. His study partner, the holy Rebbe of Zvhil, asked him: “What happened? Why has such fear and trembling suddenly fallen upon you?”

The Rav of Teplik replied that at that very moment, during their learning, he had recalled that many years earlier a difficult din Torah had come before him in his court in Teplik, dealing precisely with this very halachah they had just clarified. There, however, he had ruled the exact opposite of the conclusion they had now reached. If so, it emerged that he had not judged a true judgment—he had declared the innocent liable and the liable innocent, according to what had now become clear before them that the correct ruling should have been the complete opposite.

The Rav began to weep and was deeply distressed over his error, finding no rest for his soul. He immediately sought to investigate all the details of that case—who the litigants had been and where they were presently located—so that he could restore the money to its rightful owner, in accordance with the law governing a judge who has erred.

After great effort and intense inquiry, his associates succeeded in discovering the identity of the individual and the nature of the case. However, when they attempted to locate him in Teplik, they learned that several years earlier he had left and moved to another country, and no one knew his current whereabouts. The Rav was greatly pained by this, and in his distress he turned to the holy Rebbe of Zvhil for guidance as to what he should do.

Rabbi Shloimele said to him: “Do not worry—he will yet come here.”

Upon hearing this remarkable assurance, the Rav of Teplik prepared the full sum that he owed the man, placed it in a properly arranged envelope, and kept it with him at all times in the pocket of his coat, ready wherever he might go.

Indeed, only a few weeks passed when one day, as the Rav of Teplik left the beis haknesses after Minchah, he suddenly saw that very man, who had also come there to pray. The man was overjoyed to encounter, by chance, his revered Rav from years past in Teplik, and told him that he was now living in a distant country in the United States and had come for a brief visit to the Holy Land.

The Rav was overjoyed to meet him and asked him to step aside for a moment. He gently reminded him of that din Torah from years earlier—the man had already forgotten it—but the Rav recalled for him precisely what the case had been. He then explained that recently he had reexamined that complex matter and arrived at a clear conclusion that the correct ruling was the opposite of what he had originally decided.

As he spoke, the Rav reached into his coat pocket and drew out the prepared envelope, handing it to the man, who stood astonished and deeply moved by the Rav’s extraordinary righteousness and integrity.

A short time after this episode, the Rebbe of Zvhil concluded his period of study with the Rav of Teplik, explaining that they had already finished clarifying the matter that had been necessary for him. The perceptive gaon understood well that the entire purpose of this chavrusa from the outset had been solely to arrive at that conclusion—to reverse the earlier ruling and thereby rectify what had been distorted.

Reflecting upon this, just as one is struck with awe at this remarkable account, witnessing the open wonder and ruach hakodesh of the holy Rebbe of Zvhil zt”l, which was well known and renowned in Yerushalayim, so too one is filled with profound amazement at the great fear of Heaven of the Rav of Teplik. For when he realized that he had erred in a matter of halachah, he was overcome with anguish and dread to the point of near fainting.

How many times do we err and stumble in matters of halachah, Rachmana litzlan—and yet we do not faint from it...