

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Chukas 5770

D'ei Chochmah L'nafshechah

“Let your soul know wisdom”

Parshas Chukas

From the discourses of Moreinu v'Rabeinu
the Gaon and Tzaddik Shlit'a

- not for general circulation -



Published by the Yam Hachochmah Institute

Under the auspices of "Yeshivas Toras Chochom"

for the study of the
revealed and hidden Torah

"YAM HACHOCHMAH"
PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
P.O BOX 5245 JERUSALEM
TEL: 057-3153884 FAX: 15325388242
E-MAIL: tc7@neto.bezeqint.net

Shalosh Seudos¹ of Parshas Chukas 5766

”זאת חקת התורה אשר צוה ה' לאמר: דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו אליך פרה אדמה תמימה אשר אין בה מום אשר לא עלה עליה על. ונתתם אתה אל אלעזר הכהן, והוציא אתה אל מחוץ למחנה ושחט אתה לפניו. ולקח אלעזר הכהן מדמה באצבעו, והזה אל-נכח פני אהל-מועד מדמה שבע פעמים. ושרף את הפרה לעיניו: את ערה ואת בשרה ואת דמה על פרשה ישראל. ולקח הכהן עץ ארז ואזוב ושני תולעת, והשליך אל תוך שרפת הפרה. וכבס בגדיו הכהן ורחץ בשרו במים ואחר גבא אל המחנה, וטמא הכהן עד הערב. והשרף אתה יכבס בגדיו במים ורחץ בשרו במים, וטמא עד הערב. ואסף איש טהור את אפר הפרה והניח מחוץ למחנה במקום טהור, והיתה לעדת בני ישראל למשמרת למי נדה, חטאת הוא.”

“And Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying: This is the Torah’s decree as commanded by Hashem: Speak to the Jewish people and have them bring you a completely red heifer which has no blemish, and which has never had a yoke upon it. And you shall give it to Elazar the *kohein*, and it shall be brought forth outside the camp, and it shall be slain before him. And Elazar the *kohein* shall take of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. And the heifer shall be burnt in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall be burnt. And the *kohein* shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the *kohein* shall wash his clothes and he shall bathe his flesh in water and afterward he may come into the camp, and the *kohein* shall be unclean until the evening. And he that burns her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the evening. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and lay them up outside the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Yisrael for a water of sprinkling; it is a purification from sin.”²

¹ The lesson was delivered at the third meal of Shabbos.

² *Bamidbar* 19:2-9

Rashi explains: “‘This is the Torah’s decree’—I have engraved My decree [Note: the words for decree and engraving share the same root ק"ח] and you have no right to question it.”

The Arizal revealed that the purification process of the red heifer parallels the elevation of the *sefirah* of *Malchus*, which itself relates to the mouth.³ The purification of *Malchus* is accomplished by the “pure man who gathers.” One must elevate *Malchus* to the lofty level of the *chotem*, the “nose,” which is the source of *Da’as*, Divine awareness. The Arizal writes in *Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Chukas*: “‘And the pure man will gather the ashes of the heifer.’ This is the secret of the *chotem*, the ‘nose’ of *Ze’ir Anpin*, into which one gathers the five *gevuros*, judgments. [This is why the heifer is called the פרה—it is the פר ה', the ‘cow of five.’] Because the man gathering is pure, it says that he will be defiled until the evening, since there are husks which correspond to him. But when the ashes are placed in the *chotem*, this elevates *Binah* to the *chotem* in an aspect of *ruach*—wind or spirit. This is the deeper meaning of the parallel usage in the verses: “מי אסף רוח בכפניו... וכבס האוסף את אפר הפרה” — ‘Who gathered the wind [ruach] in His wings?’—‘And a man that is pure shall gather up the ashes of the heifer...’”⁴ [This teaching seems to conceal more than it reveals, but eventually it will be made more clear.]

Reconnecting to the Source

In terms of our own Divine service, this means that one must join *Malchus* to the light of *Da’as*, understanding. At times a person feels spiritually aroused through praying with devotion or from being in proximity to a *tzaddik*. When one feels such an arousal his main task is to reconnect his fervor and feeling to Hashem.

This is expressed in the song of Miriam’s well of this week’s *parshah*: “אז ישיר ישראֵל את השירה הזאת: עלי באר ענו-לה. באר חפרוה שרים, כרוה נדיבי העם, במח'קק, ישראֵל את השירה הזאת: עלי באר ענו-לה. באר חפרוה שרים, כרוה נדיבי העם, במח'קק,

³ *Tikunei Zohar, Pasach Eliyahu*

⁴ *Sefer Halikutim, Parshas Chukas*

”בְּמִשְׁעָנֶיְתָם ; וּמִמְדָּבָר מִתְנַה. “—“Then the Jewish people sang this song: Rise, O well, respond to this song. Nobles dug this well, the kind ones of the nation excavated it. They etched it with their staves; a gift from the desert.”⁵ The Midrash explains that [the head of each] tribe took his staff and drew the water from Moshe to his people. This means that when one is given a Divine influx he must recall the source from which this illumination stems.

Although one’s main task is to feel a deep pleasure in learning and prayer, he must not keep these feelings for himself. Instead, he must elevate them in return to their source in Hashem. He should never be like Korach who separated from Moshe as a result of his deep pleasure and *dveikus* through serving Hashem. Instead, one should be like the heads of the tribes who revealed that the source of their bounty was the spring of Moshe.

Interestingly, Moshe is not mentioned in Miriam’s song, since he was so completely nullified to Hashem. He did not think of the well as coming through him at all, since he understood that it was only from Hashem. [Although the well traveled with the Jewish people in Miriam’s merit, nevertheless it returned to them even after her death in Moshe Rabbeinu’s merit.⁶] Similarly, when one learns Torah he must not make his study into a self-contained entity. Instead, he should always bind himself in *dveikus* to Hashem while learning. This is the deeper meaning of, “a gift from the desert.” [As our sages taught, “Torah is given as a *matanah*, a gift, to one who nullifies himself like a desert.”⁷] He must know that all he has is a free gift from Hashem. Contemplating this will fill him with humility and nullify any feeling of ego.

The Baal HaSulam explains that even when one feels a deep pleasure from the illumination afforded him while learning a particular holy work he should never think the light is from the *sefer* alone. Such a thought constitutes forgetting about Hashem. One who does so will find that he has lost his original feeling for the *sefer*, since when

⁵ *Bamidbar* 21:17

⁶ *Taanis* 9a

⁷ *Nedarim* 55a

one forgets Hashem the light is extinguished. Hashem does not want us to focus on the superficial cause of our deep feeling. Instead, we must direct our attention to the inner meaning of the light—that through our learning or prayers we are feeling the light of connection to Hashem. In this manner, we reconnect to the source.

This is how we can better understand the Arizal's teaching that, "This is the Torah's decree," alludes to elevating *Malchus* to the level of *chotem* and *Da'as*. *Malchus* signifies the world of action. When we feel deep pleasure through our actions we must elevate this to *Da'as*, to awareness of the Divine. We do this when we keep our source foremost in our minds; this intensifies our *dveikus* and elevates it to Hashem. [One reason why *chotem* is *Da'as* here is because the *chotem* alludes to fear of heaven, the sense of Hashem's watchful presence. "And he [Moshiach] will smell [or 'sniff out'] the fear of Hashem, and he will not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears."⁸]

Generally, *Parshas Chukas* is the bridge between Sivan and Tammuz. Sivan is the third month of the year, while Tammuz is the fourth [when counting from Nissan]. The Gemara states that the sequence of *gimmel* followed by *dalet* in the *Alef-Beis* alludes to *gomel dalim*—bestowing kindness on the destitute.⁹ In our context, the *gimmel* that bestows alludes to *Ze'ir Anpin* and "his" Torah, while the "destitute" *dalet* symbolizes *Malchus* which has "nothing of her own."¹⁰ [The Torah-sunlight of *Ze'ir Anpin* shines onto the moon of *Malchus* and is reflected there.] The word "this" [the feminine¹¹]¹¹—the *zos* of the beginning of our *parshah*—alludes to feminine *Malchus* which must be connected to *Z'eir Anpin*, symbolized by the word "*Toras*"—זאת חקת התורה.

In this manner one is saved from the results of the breaking of the tablets. On the contrary, one reveals the "wellspring dug by the noblemen...who etched it with their

⁸ *Yeshayah* 11:3; *Likutei Moharan* I:2

⁹ *Shabbos* 104a

¹⁰ *Pri Eitz Chaim, Sha'ar HaTefillah*, Introduction

¹¹ *Zohar* II:37b

staves,” when the heads of each tribe stood in their place and drew bounty with their staves to their own place. In this manner, the light of Torah spreads to every place and Hashem is provided with a dwelling place among the lower beings. This is Hashem's purpose for us, that through *gimmel dalet*, through bestowing the light of Torah into our actual life and reality, we reveal that Hashem is really in every place. [This is why Hashem is sometimes referred to as the *Makom*, which literally means “the place”—“Because He is the place of the universe.”¹²]

Moshiach Conquers Through Prayer

Now we can better understand the concept of *chotem* as it applies to *avodah*. In the *Zohar* we find that the soul of Moshiach waits to be revealed in the heavenly chamber known as *kan tzipor*, the “bird’s nest.” Rebbe Nachman revealed that the main weapon of Moshiach, and indeed of every single Jew, is prayer. Prayer is the aspect of the *chotem*. He explained: “The main weapon of Moshiach is prayer, which is an aspect of the *chotem*, as the verse states, ‘And for My praise will I refrain [אחטם] for you.’¹³ His vitality comes through prayer, and all his wars will be waged and will be won through prayer. As we find in the verse, יַבְחַרְבִּי וּבִקְשָׁתִי—‘[I conquered Shechem] with my sword and my bow,’ which Rashi renders as, ‘with prayer and supplication.’ [Even the word for ‘with my bow’ has the same spelling as, ‘my supplication’—בִּקְשָׁתִי.] As the verse states, כִּי לֹא בִקְשָׁתִי אֶבְטַח וְכֹנִי בְּאֱלֹהִים הַלְלוּנִי—‘I will not trust in my bow...We will praise G-d.’ This is an aspect of, ‘And for My praise will I refrain [אחטם] for you.’¹⁴

It is the work of every Jew, especially as we approach the end of days, to toil in prayer and conquer the world through revealing *Elokus* in everything. This is the purpose of all creation, as the verse states: “And you shall know today and place on your heart that Hashem is G-d, in the heavens above and on the earth below there is no

¹² *Bereishis Rabbah*, #68

¹³ *Yeshayah* 48:9

¹⁴ *Likutei Moharan* I:2

other.” Hashem gave us the Torah and revealed His Divine Names through his prophets only so that His G-dliness would be revealed among the lower beings.

Contemplating Divine Names

The main purpose of *kavanos* is not a technical and dry contemplation of Divine Names. Rather, it is to attain the aspect of "והיריחו ביראת ה'"—to be inspired with fear of heaven and a sense of Hashem's presence. Every letter of Torah that one learns—since the Torah is a composite of Divine Name—and every Name one meditates upon must purify one's thoughts and awaken his heart so that he feels love, fear, and *dveikus*.

The purification of the red heifer entails raising it from the level of [*Malchus*] Mouth to [*Ze'ir Anpin*] Nose. What we say with our mouth is an aspect of the element of earth, since it is dry [and lacking wholeness and vitality]. We must imbue what we say with the spirit of the *chotem*, the source of *Ze'ir Anpin* and the spectrum of the emotive *middos*. In this manner we will open our hearts to learn and pray with arousal and *dveikus*. This is the meaning of the verse, “And he will smell **with** the fear of heaven.” [He will bind the aspect of “smell”/*chotem* **with** that of fear of heaven, which is associated with *Malchus*. “Were it not for the fear of *Malchus*...”¹⁵] When one learns or contemplates *sheimos* with vitality and illumination, he lifts the aspect of mouth to nose. He will say every word of his prayer with enthusiasm, since his heart will be open to Hashem.

Regarding this our sages taught, “Rabbi Meir found a pomegranate; he ate the inside and threw away the husk.”¹⁶ [Rabbi Meir was able to learn the good that Elisha ben Avuyah had within him, and rejected his outer husk of heresy.] The word רמון is the outer four letters of the name of the angel מטטרוין. [One should not say this name except in abbreviated form, *MaTaT*.] The remaining two letters טיט indicate “eating” the inside, connecting the outer action with the inner feeling and elevating it to the level of *chotem*. [The *gematria* of טיט is equal to eighteen, “life,” because this is the vitality

¹⁵ *Avos* 3:2

¹⁶ *Chagigah* 15b

one receives when one rises to the higher level. The remaining letters of the name *MaTaT* have a combined value that equals that of the word *r'tzo*, “running.” This is the upward spiritual running to the higher level, in the sense of the “*Chayos*—spiritual beings filled with life-force—run and return.”¹⁷] Through such elevation one ascends higher and higher until he becomes incorporated into the highest realm—the level of the Torah’s inner music and spirit—where one can taste of Hashem’s essence.

The main way to escape feelings of dryness and restore one’s *dveikus* is by constantly re-focusing one’s mind on the fact that everything is *Elokus*. One feels supernal illumination and true *dveikus* specifically through continuous review. For example, one who wishes to feel the light of learning Gemara must review assiduously before he tastes the light. The same is true regarding feeling the light of Hashem in the world. He must continuously review until he merits to, “smell with the fear of G-d.”

Existence from Nothingness—יש מאין

Now we can better understand the mechanism of spiritual rectification effected through the earth and ashes of the *parah adumah*. The element of earth is the nature of the material world, which has a substance and existence, a *ישות*, that can drag a person down physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This is the negative manifestation of earth, yet it also has a positive manifestation. The Torah says, “You are of earth, and to earth you will return.” There is a returning as well to the *ישות* of the Divine—where all existence is Hashem—an immersion and a losing of the self within Hashem’s absolute reality. This is a very lofty form of *avodah* to which one must ascend.

The Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch taught about a concept known as the, “obscuring of the self,” and it is related to what we have just learned. Before Hashem created the universe, there was only His infinite light. He created endless worlds and graduated levels of constriction until the bottom-most level of this material world, the world of *Asiyah*. In simple terms, the ultimate goal is to return to the state of

¹⁷ *Likutei Torah, Yechezkel 15b*

nullification of the self within Hashem's infinite light, what we would call אין or nothingness. Yet there is actually an even higher state; that of delighting in the שי of Hashem, the personalized experience of Hashem's essence—where אין and אני coexist. This is why we are formed of actual earth despite all of its negative ramifications—to contain the potential to reach this uppermost experience of Divine existence.

The earth of the *avodah* of the preparation of the red heifer's ashes is the aspect of ישות, and while it can “defile the pure”—it can foster arrogance which can only be tempered by binding oneself to the true *tzaddikim*¹⁸—nevertheless its holy aspect can “purify the impure.” It is only when a person is truly impure and like nothing in his own eyes that he can come to this lofty level of holy שי. This is why Shlomo HaMelech said regarding the mystery of this dual nature of the *parah adumah*, “I said I will become wise [and understand it], yet it is still far from me.”¹⁹ The level of holy ישות can only be reached by one who is completely nullified in his own eyes. It is only the absolutely humble that can experience this שי without the danger of falling into pride.

Cedar-wood, Hyssop, and Scarlet

This joining of absolute *bitul* and holy ישות is also embodied in the cedar-wood and the hyssop used in the preparation of the earthy-ashes of the heifer. The element of earth is always shouting that it has its own independent existence. This “selfness” in the physical matter of the heifer has to be burned. As we said earlier, the burning The towering cedar represents ישות, while the humble hyssop and the *tola'as* are the symbols of *bitul* and nothingness. [“For I am a *tola'as* (a worm) and not a man...”²⁰] Both elements are burned with the ashes—the product of burning the material [יש - מלכות] and transforming it into light and smoke, which is the level of the *chotem*. This is carried out in *avodah* by reviewing our learning and focus on the Divine Names over and over again so that they will be imbued with emotional passion and *dveikus*. They

¹⁸ *Likutei Moharan* I:10

¹⁹ *Koheles* 7:23; *Yoma* 14a

²⁰ *Tehillim* 22:7

cannot be “dry like earth”—they have to be illuminated by fire and transformed. “The pure man will gather the ashes”—the true *tzaddik* knows exactly how to temper, transform, and utilize the element of earth within himself for the purpose of *dveikus*. In this way, the פִּיר דִּינִים, the “280 aspects of *gevuros*” of this world embodied in the actual heifer are uplifted to the place of the *chotem*. When we follow this path, we can likewise rise to the level of *chotem*, and as we persevere in our faithful review and strong attachment to simple faith in Hashem’s absolute existence we can rise higher to the level of *Mocha Sesima’ah*, and from there to the heights of *Reisha D’lo Isyada’ah*.

The act of persistent review for the purpose of *dveikus* is compared to the action of blowing air with a bellows on a fire so that it should rise higher and higher. Spiritually, this “inspiration and expiration” to feed the flame derives from the 42-Name. [The 42-Name is made up of three expressions of the יָד or Divine Hand which have a combined *gematria* of 42, since it represents “lifting up” our *avodah*.] The entire universe was created just for the purpose of this uplifting. At first everything was purely Hashem’s infinite light, but then He constricted Himself as expressed by the five [main aspects of] judgments known as מִנְצִפִּיךְ [the letters that assume a second form, representing the side of judgment and which have a total value of 280 = פִּיר], through the mechanisms of letters and *partzufim* which we call *Rachel* and *Leah*. All of the further downward declension of all the worlds of *Atzilus-Beriyah-Yetzirah-Asiyah* and the corresponding levels of creations known as inanimate-vegetative-animal-human were all for the purpose of the human being in the world of *Asiyah* eventually managing to uplift his every experience at every level—the *Malchus* in each world—by binding it to the emotion and spiritual love, fear, and *dveikus* that is the *chotem*. We were created to rise in this way from level to level, and in this way unite *HaVaYaH* and *Elokim*.

We see, then, that the *avodah* begins with humility, “And I am a worm, and not a man,” the *tola’as* of the scarlet thread. We must follow the path of Moshe Rabbeinu who said, “And we are nothing,” for Moshe began the revelation of Torah in the world. The completion of his task will be accomplished by Moshiach, who will himself bear

the spark of Moshe Rabbeinu. "מה שיהיה הוא שיהיה"—"That which was will be"²¹—the initials of "that which was" spell "Moshe."²² He who began the *avodah* will be the one to finish it. From the state of, "we are nothing," Moshe Rabbeinu rose to, "smell with the fear of G-d, [to be imbued] with a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of knowledge and fear of Hashem." This is the *ruach* of *Atika* that mitigates the פ"י ד"י. Because the *tzaddik* is completely nullified and humble, because he has no sense of existence other than Hashem's and always returns to review the holy *sheimos* again and again whenever his *avodah* feels like "dry earth," he merits afterward יש דקדושה. He is gifted by Hashem with a feeling of boldness and confidence, because Torah is mainly acquired through *azus d'kedushah*.

Conquering the Borders of Eretz Yisrael

When the *tzaddik* contemplates the Divine Names, it is not only in the manner of א"י or total *bitul*, but also in the manner of ש, in the sense that he feels the emotions of love and fear—the Divine *middos* on every level and expressed by every Name. He feels them all viscerally, but instead of this making him feel his individuated existence distinct from Hashem, it binds him ever closer to Hashem. Within the experience of measure and limits—the emotive *middos* of the level of *chotem*—he comes into contact with the infinite. Everywhere he looks, he sees Hashem's attributes expressed. The *tzaddik* certainly has the holy confidence and strength to do battle with the *sitra achra* and conquer the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael. It is only in order to preserve the order of free will that Moshe Rabbeinu has not entered the land materially. On the spiritual plane, Moshe Rabbeinu already was victorious and conquered all its borders.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explained that Moshe Rabbeinu's striking the rock is the aspect of *chutz la'arets*, while speaking to the rock is the aspect of Eretz Yisrael.²³ Speech is a manifestation of the 280 judgments, the doubled-letters of מנצפ"ך that need

²¹ *Koheles* 1:9

²² *Sha'ar Hapesukim, Yisro*

²³ *Likutei Moharan* I:20

to be uplifted to their source. The rock is the most material aspect of earth and *Malchus*-speech that requires transformation through the action of the *chotem*. At its source, *Malchus* is very elevated; at the highest levels, *Ze'ir Anpin* and *Nukvah* are joined together and are truly one.

This helps us to understand a statement that Reb Nosson of Breslov made about himself, that he was able to hold steadfast through all of the trials and opposition that he faced later when he recalled the penetrating look that Rebbe Nachman gave him on his deathbed. The look spoke volumes to Reb Nosson. It said, "I know just what you will have to go through. Be very strong." This look is a manifestation of the "look" at the Divine Names that fills a person with awareness of Hashem's absolute existence and *bitul*. This penetrating look gives a person the strength to hold fast to Hashem no matter what.

The Perfection of Prayer

The verse continues, "From the desert to Matanah, and from Matanah to Nachliel, and from Nachliel to Bamos." When a person is bound to Hashem's absolute existence he receives the holy boldness that he needs to be able to pray properly. Prayer really requires *azus d'kedushah* because otherwise one will not feel able to ask Hashem for absolutely everything that he needs at all times. One must envision the Creator before him and simply pour out his heart before Him with total confidence in Hashem's providence and love. It is through this that the *tzaddik* accomplishes all of his victories and even draws souls closer to Hashem, and this joining of "nothingness" and "existence" also is active within us. With it, we can also strengthen ourselves to accomplish great things in *avodah*. Moshe Rabbeinu prayed 515 prayers to overturn the decree against his entering the land, and had he only offered one more he would have succeeded. It was only because Hashem prevented him that his final prayer was thwarted. But his power of prayer is still active within us, and we must have absolute confidence in the greatness and efficacy of our prayers.

If a person loses his enthusiasm for prayer, he must realize it is because he is only presently in the state of “nothingness” but lacks the important element of “existence.” He must realize that joining them both together is the purpose of all of creation, so that the Jewish people can reveal Hashem’s simply mercy in the merit of the true *tzaddikim*. His prayer must be like that of the *tzaddikim*—pervaded by humble יא and energized by bold ש. We must not be embarrassed to speak to Hashem like a good friend, like a father, from whom we do not fear to ask for a gift. “And from the desert, a *matanah*, a gift.” We should not think that the person who asks for something is like the description of the wicked in the *Zohar*, who constantly, “bark like dogs, give! Give!” The *chutzpadik* type of demand described there is only when a person is all ש and no יא, but when both aspects are in balance, it is certainly important to ask for every single thing.

This is the meaning of the sages’ words, “If you shall go in My statutes [חקים]—You shall toil in Torah.” One must “go” in the Torah, walk in it and tread the path of effort in order to reach the level of the *middos* of love, fear, and *dveikus* and see Hashem’s attributes in everything around him.

“And from Bamos to the cliff...and from there upon the face of the wilderness.” The final destination is the redemption itself, when Hashem’s presence is completely revealed in the lower worlds and the land.

“Let Your Soul Know Wisdom”

This is the meaning of: “דעה חכמה לנפשך והיא כתר לראשך”—“Let your soul (*nefesh*) know (*d’ei*) wisdom (*Chochmah*) and it will be a crown (*Kesser*) for your head.”²⁴ Uplift the level of *nefesh* / *Malchus* and bind it to the source of *Chochmah* within the level of *chotem*, the place of *Da’as*. By review and persistence, you will come to have the “crown to your head”: *yesh* and the *ayin* will be joined and you will feel Hashem’s light.

²⁴ From the *Shabbos zemer* “D’ror Yikrah,” based on *Mishlei* 24:14.

May Hashem help us to immerse ourselves into prayer in the proper way, because this is really our main power. Moshiach will himself conquer all of his battles through the power of perfected prayer, where *yesh* and *ayin* are joined. May Hashem open for us His thirteen attributes of mercy that are illuminated by the three permutations of the *Shem HaVaYaH*. Then we will be able to draw down the three main needs of children, health, and sustenance with great assistance from above, immediately with the arrival of our righteous redeemer. Amen.

Translated and Adapted by Rav Micha Golshevsky.