

# הנהגת THE PATH TO FOLLOW

## Nº 40 VAETHANAN 13 AV 5764 JULY.31.2004

**HEVRAT PINTO**  
*Under Aegis of*  
**Rabbi David Hanania Pinto שליט"א**  
11, rue du plateau - 75019 PARIS  
Tel: (331) 42 08 25 40 • Fax (331) 42 08 50 85  
8 Morris Road - Spring Valley NY 10977  
Tel: 1-845 426 1276 • Fax: 1-845 426 1149  
[www.hevratpinto.org](http://www.hevratpinto.org)  
*Responsible of publication Hanania Soussan*

### CONCERNING STRENGTH, PRAYER AND TORAH

*(by Rabbi David Hanania Pinto שליט"א)*

It is written, "I implored the L-RD at that time" (Deuteronomy 3:23). What time was that? In one of his books on the Torah, Rabbi Israel Salanter writes concerning this very subject: "We see by this that a person should not tell himself that a certain time is good for Torah and prayer, yet another time is not. He should refrain from saying: 'I'm not in the mood' or 'I don't have the time,' or even 'I'll study when I have time' (Perkei Avoth 2: 5). No! All times are good for Torah study and reciting prayers! And if not now, then when will I be able to (Perkei Avoth 1:14)? One should never neglect any prayer or randomly choose when to study Torah. Perhaps it is precisely when I have time to study and pray, yet refrain from doing so, that accusations are brought against me in Heaven. Who will then speak in my defense?" Consequently, as soon as we have a minute of free time, let us not hesitate; let us begin studying Torah right away. Only the Torah is called Tov ("good" (Berachot 5a)), as it is written: "I have given you a good teaching; do not forsake My Torah" (Proverbs 4:2).

This allows us to understand why Moses yearned so greatly to enter into Eretz Israel. As our Sages teach, did he need the food that it provided (Sotah 14a)? Rather, what he wanted was to accomplish all the mitzvot that pertained to the land. Now the entire Torah bears Moses' name, as it is written: "Remember the Torah of Moses My servant"

(Malachi 3:22). It was for us that He dictated a teaching to Moses, and it would remain the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:4). As a result, if everyone studies Torah and performs mitzvot, it is as if Moses were studying it and performing them. This refers even more particularly to the students whom he trained during the course of the generations. Why then did Moses so insist on entering the Holy Land to perform G-d's commandments there?

As our Sages teach, Moses knew what new things the most learned scholars would discover over the course of the generations (Megillah 19b), and that there are 70 facets to the Torah (Bamidbar Rabba 13:15). Therefore if Moses was so adamant about entering the Holy Land, it was precisely in order that there he could perform all the mitzvot according to all the Torah interpretations that the forthcoming generations would give.

How can a person reach such a spiritual level? By making of his world a world of Torah, by studying it at all times, without respite. In this way we see its profound truth, and we can compare all the innovations and interpretations concerning each of the mitzvot. We will perform them without the least trace of debate or doubt. We will also understand the Torah clearly, without uncertainty or doubt.

*Continuation page 2*

This in fact is what Moses sought. We see by this how much one must pray in order to probe the depths of Torah and to not stumble (G-d forbid).

Moses our teacher wanted to receive the Torah as a free gift, just like the Tzaddikim (Devarim Rabba 2:1), for an understanding of Torah – which, as we mentioned, is called Tov – depends on G-d's will, and it was given as a gift. We also want to receive it as a gift in order to understand it. Commenting on the verse that states, "One with a good eye will be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9), the Gemara explains that because Moses had a good eye, he transmitted the Torah to Israel (Nedarim 38a). A person must therefore never claim, "Because of my merits, G-d will help me to understand Torah!" Rather, he should think, "Perhaps I do not have any merits and everything that I do is for selfish reasons!" Even Moses did not count on the many good deeds that he performed.

As we have seen in an earlier lesson, Hashem asked Moses to take vengeance for the Children of Israel upon the Midianites, after which he would be gathered to his fathers (Numbers 31:2). Upon hearing such a commandment, a normal man would have been so disturbed that he would have had no desire to pray. Such was not the case with Moses, who completely maintained his composure. He therefore provided us with an excellent example: It is precisely during times of distress and danger that we should concentrate all our thoughts into praying and serving Hashem, and not to get discouraged when confronted with problems.

We always read Parsha Va'etchanan on Shabbat Nachamu, which follows the ninth of Av. The holy Temple will be rebuilt only through Torah study and prayer – that is our nechamah (consolation). As we know, prayer that is recited with utmost clarity (and which is not influenced by the problems of the exile) liberates us from the exile. Concerning his disciples' question as to what he does before prayer, Rabbi Chaim of Tzanz replied, "I ask that I can pray during

prayer." This is exactly what Moses said: "I implored the L-RD" (Deuteronomy 3:23). What was his prayer at that time by uttering the word leimor (saying)? It was: I asked Hashem to help me say what I should be leimor (saying).

It is written, " 'Why do I need your numerous sacrifices?' says the L-RD. 'I am sated with burnt offerings. ... New Moon and Sabbath, and your calling of convocations, I cannot abide mendacity with solemn assembly' " (Isaiah 1:11,13). This was because the Children of Israel were not constantly engaged in Torah study, a fact that made them succumb to the three cardinal sins that brought about the destruction of the holy Temple. Consequently, it is appropriate to fix a time every day for Torah study and to engage oneself ever more in it whenever a spare moment arises. As we know, the world rests on three foundations: Torah study, prayer, and good deeds (Perkei Avoth 1:2). A man, who is a microcosm of the universe (Sefer Yetzirah 212), should tell himself that the world was created just for him (Sanhedrin 37a), hence his great responsibility becomes apparent. If he neither studies nor prays, he has contributed to the destruction of his own world.

We can in this way explain the verse that states: "It is time to act for the L-RD; they have voided Your Torah" (Psalms 119:126): If one is content with simply fixing regular times for Torah study, but not seeking to study it each time a spare moment arises, a person has then "voided Your Torah," and it is for that reason that Jerusalem was destroyed. Moses said, "But you who cling to the L-RD your G-d – you are still alive today" (Deuteronomy 4:4). When do you cling to Hashem? When you engage in the study of Torah, which is called Life (Avoth d'Rabbi Nathan 34:10). Today (that is, at all times – all day long – not just at a fixed time) is when you should study Torah. Otherwise you risk falling into the hands of the forces of evil, your prayers will not be worthy of their name, and your world will be destroyed. Yet you build the world when you constantly study Torah.

# STORIES OF TZADIKIM

## *Remove Anger from Your Heart and Evil from Your Flesh*

**R**abbi Chaim of Kossov, author of the Torah work entitled *Torat Chaim*, related that he once traveled to a town to perform a certain mitzvah there. While on route, he stayed in a village and readied himself to spend the night with a local Jew. The latter was very happy to be able to host him, and he prepared a bed for Rav, who then retired for the night. After midnight the Rav heard someone reciting the blessing for Torah study with great concentration. He then heard him beginning to study Gemara. When daylight broke and there was enough light to make out shapes, the Rabbi saw a blind old man lying in a bed and studying with great devotion. The old man said that he was the father of the Rav's host, and that for 20 years he had separated himself from all worldly things and was occupied exclusively with Torah study and serving G-d. He had not the slightest contact with anyone, and he wanted nothing other than Torah. He lived with his son, who took care of all his needs, and was completely free to devote himself to serving G-d. The Rabbi, who then realized that he was in the presence of a man of great spiritual stature, asked that he enter into a firm pact with him, such that whoever would die first would come back in a dream and tell the other how he was judged in Heaven. He accepted, and they agreed to their pact.

Some years later the blind man died. He kept his promise and came to Rabbi Chaim in a dream. He told him the following: "When my soul rose to Heaven, there was a great problem among the Heavenly host. When they brought me into the Celestial Court and began to examine my case, they realized that during the last 20 years of my life I was spiritually elevated and pure, and as a result I had atoned for my sins, to the last trace of impure thoughts, to the extent that I was clean of all sin and filled with Torah and mitzvot. Then all

of a sudden an angel dressed in black cried out, 'You wish to grant Gan Eden to this man? Yet he has scorned the Torah in public and has still not repented!' "

The angled explained what he meant in detail.

When he was younger, the man had taught young boys in a village far from where he lived. He stayed there all winter long and returned to his hometown for Passover, where he was known and honored as a Talmid Chacham. Once he went to Synagogue to pray on Shabbat, but when he was given the fourth Aliya his heart was filled with anger. He waited until the end of the service and went to express his irritation to the Gabbai. "To someone as honored as myself you give only the fourth Aliya? Someone of my status should get the sixth, or the Maftir!"

In Heaven the verdict was immediately pronounced, and the deceased was given the choice of either (1) Coming back in another incarnation to repair this sin, or (2) Suffering three minutes of shame in Heaven. Naturally, he chose the second penalty.

All of a sudden, the gates of Gan Eden were opened and an angel came to bring him to where he was to be put to shame before all the Tzaddikim in Heaven: "See this putrid drop – he had the insolence to say that the fourth Aliya was not enough for him."

When Rabbi Chaim would relate this story, he would finish by saying: "Know that the Holy One, blessed be He, had pity on that great man, lessening his punishment so that he did not feel too much shame. Otherwise, he would not have been able to withstand it any longer, and he would have asked to return on earth rather than to suffer this shame, be it only for a minute more. From this we learn what harm we do to ourselves by anger and stubbornness.