

# MAN'S CONNECTION TO HASHEM THROUGH UNITY (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

## The Path To Follow MISHPATIM

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## EISHET CHAYIL

### The Widow of Zarephath

There was a severe famine that took place in the time of the prophet Elijah, a famine that lasted three years. The Holy One, blessed be He, commanded Elijah to travel to the Cherit brook, which faces the Jordan, and there ravens would bring him food. The Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to show Elijah just how much the people were suffering on account of the famine, and so He dried up the brook. Having no water, Elijah could not remain there. Therefore Hashem said to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath.... Behold, I have commanded a widow to sustain you there" (I Kings 17:8). The Sages said that this widow was the mother of the prophet Jonah. When Elijah arrived at her home, she welcomed him with great honor. When Elijah asked her for bread, she brought what little flour she had left and informed him that it was all there was. If she used it to make him bread, they would surely starve to death. Elijah then told her to prepare a small cake for him, and he added a blessing: "The jug of flour shall not run out, and the flask of oil shall not lack, until the day that the L-RD provides rain upon the face of the earth" (v.14). A great miracle then occurred, for his blessing rested upon the flour and oil, and for an entire year they were never lacking in her house.

In the parsha dealing with the Hebrew slave, Rabbi Abarbanel writes: " 'He shall work for six years, and in the seventh he shall go free, for no charge' [Exodus 21:2]. This verse tells him that if he planned on making money by ridding himself of the drudgery of having to support himself, his wife, and his children, then he will end up with nothing other than the shame of having been sold as a slave and having worked for six years. In the end he will go free without money, leaving as he arrived and having earned nothing for his servitude. If he was married and believed that he could earn a living with his master, in the end his wife will depart with him and his term of service will leave him as he was at first. This is the meaning of 'his wife shall leave with him' [v.3]."

We see an amazing lesson here. On one hand the Torah is strict with regards to a person who stole in the hope that, by doing so, he could rid himself of the burden of having to earn a living. Thus the Torah says that he will leave empty-handed, having gained nothing from his years of servitude other than the shame of having been sold as a slave. Nevertheless, the Torah commands his master to treat him with dignity, so much dignity in fact that the Sages have said: "Whoever buys a Hebrew slave is like buying a master for himself" (Kiddushin 20a). This is because a master must treat his slave like himself in every respect, including food, drink, and sleeping accommodations. Similarly, a master is forbidden from treating his slave with contempt, for he has the mitzvah of giving his slave possessions when he leaves, things from all that Hashem has given him, as it is written: "Adorn him generously from your flocks, from your threshing floor, and from your wine cellar" (Deuteronomy 15:14). Why must he do this? It is because it is written, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt" (v.15). Just as Hashem treated us with mercy and granted us great possessions when we left Egypt (such as the spoils of the sea), so too must we act with our slaves. This mitzvah is also meant to teach us how to treat all people with respect.

On the other hand, the Torah is teaching a slave that he must submit himself entirely and solely to Hashem. We see this by the fact that his ear is pierced against a door, as Rashi says in quoting Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai: "This ear, which heard My voice on Mount Sinai when I proclaimed, 'The Children of Israel are slaves to Me' – yet went out and acquired a master for himself – let it be pierced!" (Kiddushin 22b).

This is why a slave's ear is pierced next to a mezuzah, for it would seem that he does not love Hashem. Instead, he loves his master and family, as we read: "I love my master, my wife, and my children" (Exodus 21:5). Hence it is precisely next to a mezuzah that he is shown that he must also love Hashem, for in the mezuzah it is written: "You shall love the L-RD your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Still, we must ask why it is a slave's ear that is pierced, rather than his mouth. After all, it was the mouth that said, "We shall do and we shall hear," a statement that the slave is now transgressing. Earlier on Mount Sinai he expressed his desire to be Hashem's servant, to submit to Him and do His will. Yet now he says, "I love my master," submitting to a man of flesh and blood!

We may explain this by saying that the main thing is hearing, for hearing leads to action, as the Sages

said concerning Jethro: " 'Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard' [Exodus 18:1]. What news did he hear, such that he came?" (Zevachim 116a). This demonstrates that hearing is paramount, for it is what prompted Jethro to take action. It was because he heard – not just externally, but deep within his heart – that he was moved to travel to the parched desert of Sinai, to leave honor behind and place himself in the shadow of Moses and the Children of Israel. This is why we pierce the ear of a slave, for he heard, "The Children of Israel are slaves to Me" (Leviticus 25:55). We see a similar thing today with people who return to G-d. Many of them experience this spiritual awakening on account of some moral lesson or reprimand that they heard, words that left a pure heart and entered into theirs. Such words can change, and indeed transform a person's entire way of life. However when someone disparages what he hears, his ear must be pierced in order for him to repent by means of his ear. He must submit to Hashem and be like other Jews, who yield only to Hashem, His Torah, and His mitzvot.

Thus we can all learn something from the passage on the Hebrew slave. Like the master in this verse, a person who serves Hashem must control his "slave," meaning his instincts. A person must also acquire friends just as he acquires possessions, as the Sages have said: "Provide yourself with a teacher and acquire for yourself a friend" (Perkei Avoth 1:6). A friend is something he acquires, a personal possession that will remain with him for the rest of his life; a friend is not someone who loves him only sometimes. This is the meaning of, "He shall work for six years [shesh shanim]" the word shesh ("six") having the same numerical value as the word keshet ("connection").

Everyone must therefore have friends, as the sage writes: "Even if 6,000 people love you, though a single individual detests you, let it not be trivial in your eyes, for the more friends the better" (Mivchar HaPeninim, Shaar Chaverim). The same idea is expressed by the verse, "In a multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). Sometimes when one person is not available, a second or third person is, and in this way life becomes more secure. However a single adversary can sometimes cause a tremendous deal of harm, even if he is all alone.

It is only through friends that we can elevate ourselves and progress in the service of Hashem and the fear of Heaven. One of the ways by which the Torah is acquired is through "close association with friends" (Perkei Avoth 6:6). Since a friend connects us to the Holy One, blessed be He, this will perpetuate itself throughout life. The statement, "I love my master" means that he has not acquired a friend, and so he can only say, "I love my master." This alludes to Hashem, meaning that he works solely for Him and has not connected himself to others. Thus his ear will have to be pierced on the day of his death. This will demonstrate that he did not listen to what Hashem said on Mount Sinai, namely that there must be unity among the Jewish people. At that point, "He shall serve him forever" (Exodus 21:6), meaning that he was a servant of Hashem only in this world, yet in the World to Come he will not be considered as such, even if he thinks of himself as a ben Torah and G-d-fearing Jew. This is really not the case, and when he arrives above he will realize that he has nothing.

This is why it is essential for us to connect ourselves to friends, to other people who can help us in serving Hashem. This is because a single adversary cannot help us, whereas friends can bring us closer to Hashem. If someone only wants to love Hashem, without connecting to friends, his ear will be pierced, for after his life on earth he will realize that he is completely empty, given that Hashem desires unity among the Jewish people. It is only in this way that we can connect ourselves to Hashem.

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## You Are Our Praise

On the verse, “He shall cause him to be healed” (Exodus 21:19), the Sages have explained: “Here it may be derived that authorization was granted [by G-d] to the physician to heal” (Bava Kama 85a).

We need to understand how anyone could possibly think that a physician would not be allowed to heal people. The Chafetz Chaim answers by saying that it is the Holy One, blessed be He, Who makes people sick. Therefore why should a physician come and interfere? Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian adds: Imagine that Reuven and Shimon are engaged in an argument, and Shimon strikes Reuven with a rock or fist, the result being that Reuven is confined to bed. When people start talking about the incident, they will focus on what actually occurred and say, “Shimon struck Reuven.” Rabbi Lopian tells us that this viewpoint betrays a lack of faith in Hashem, for everything comes from Heaven. Such incidents are made to happen through the intermediary of a wicked person; thus Shimon (the wrongdoer) came and struck Reuven. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Shimon is not the source of Reuven’s punishment.

In the *refaeinu* (“heal us”) blessing of the Amidah, formulated by the Men of the Great Assembly, Hashem is called “a faithful and merciful healer.” In his book *Tosefet Beracha*, Rabbi Baruch HaLevi Epstein Zatzal asks why the Holy One, blessed be He, is called “faithful.” He replies that the description, “a faithful and merciful healer” can only be applied to Hashem, for a human physician cannot demonstrate both of these characteristics at the same time. For example, if a physician has to operate on a patient, who would suffer as a result (since it is inevitable that operations cause some pain), a merciful physician would take pity on him and thus not faithfully carry out his task. If he wants to lessen these pains a little, he will not perform the necessary operation. Alternatively, a faithful physician will ignore the pain that might result from the operation. Hashem, however, is both “a faithful and merciful healer.”

In the same blessing of the Amidah we say: “For You are our praise,” an expression that does not appear in any other blessing. For example, we do not say, “Bless for us this year, for You are our praise” or, “Gather our exiles, for You are our praise.” Why not? Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky replies: Imagine that someone is suffering, having to limp for weeks on account of a swollen leg, which is obvious for everyone to see. When he hears of a renowned physician who deals in precisely the ailment from which he is suffering, he goes to see him and is cured. When his neighbors see him walking smoothly on both legs, as if nothing had happened, they will surely be stunned. Everyone will say, “He went to see Dr. Medelowitz, a renowned physician, who succeeds in everything he does.” Such occurrences are especially common in the realm of medicine, which is why we pray three times a day to Hashem: “For You are our praise” – it is You Whom we praise for having healed and saved us.

## Beginning With The Slave

It is written, “These are the ordinances that you shall place before them: When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years, and in the seventh he shall go free, for no change” (Exodus 21:1-2).

There are many laws that are more “appealing” than those regarding the Hebrew slave. For example, there is “When you lend money to My people” (ibid. 22:24), which deals with a person who has a *gemach* and lends to others. There is also the law regarding the “unpaid custodian,” which covers situations in which we leave money or goods with a person to protect without pay. Why did the Torah decide to begin the parsha with laws dealing with the Hebrew slave? The answer is that the Jewish people had just emerged from slavery towards freedom. They had just escaped the slavery of Pharaoh, and although they entered into the servitude of Hashem, this servitude was only on the part of the evil

inclination. As for the good inclination, “None is free except one who studies Torah.” Hence to serve Hashem, we must first not be enslaved to men. This is what we are taught by the parsha on the Hebrew slave, that the master of a Hebrew slave must treat him with dignity; he must not oppress him. For example, a Hebrew slave must not spend seven full years working for him (other details are given in Parshiot Behar and Re’eh). Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz adds that in our parsha, having recently emerged from Egypt, the Children of Israel still had the taste of slavery in their mouths. Hence now was the right time to teach them about how to treat slaves.

## What the Ear Hears

It is written, “If the slave says, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children – I will not go free,’ then his master shall bring him to the judges. And he shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with an awl, and he shall serve him forever” (Exodus 21:5-6).

Why is it precisely the ear that is pierced? Rashi cites the Sages in saying: “This ear, which heard My voice on Mount Sinai when I proclaimed, ‘The Children of Israel are slaves to Me’ – yet went out and acquired a master for himself – let it be pierced.” The Rebbe of Ger, the Imrei Emet, says that only the ear heard on Mount Sinai, not the heart. Such is the result of performing mitzvot superficially, not with the heart!

## In the Best Interests of the Girl

It is written, “If a man will sell his daughter as a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do” (Exodus 21:7).

Where have we heard that it is permitted for a man to sell his daughter as a maidservant? The Rambam states that a man does not have the right to sell his daughter unless he is so destitute that he owns neither property nor movable goods, including clothes. Only if he finds himself in such a state is he permitted to sell her (Hilchot Avadim 4:2). Nevertheless, a father is obligated to redeem his daughter after having sold her, since selling her brings shame upon the family. If the father is dead or cannot be found, or if he is unable to obtain sufficient money to redeem her, she must work until her term of service is over. In cases where the situation at home is deplorable, it may be preferable for a young girl to be sold as a maidservant, given that the one who acquires her is a wealthy man. This is because she is sold on condition that, upon growing up, she will marry either the wealthy man or his son, or she will be released. Until that time comes, however, the one who acquires her must take care of her and see to all her needs. Thus the Torah is actually providing for the girl when her father cannot. This does not mean, however, that he can sell her as a maidservant whenever he wants.

## Nobody to Speak to

It is written, “You shall not afflict any widow or orphaned child. If *aneh te’aneh* [you afflict them], and if *tzaok itz’ak* [they will cry out] to Me, *shamoah eshma* [I will surely hear] their cry” (Exodus 22:21-22).

Why do these terms repeat themselves? The gaon Rabbi Mordechai Mann said that when a woman is upset about something, she wants to tell her husband about it as soon as she gets home. The same occurs when a child is tormented, for he thinks, “Just wait until I get home and tell my father about this!” However a widow and an orphan have nobody to share their pain with when others afflict them. Thus their pain is twofold: Once for the affliction itself, and another time for having nobody to tell it to. Thus, “If you afflict them” – if you afflict them once, they will suffer twice, which is why “they will cry out to Me,” once for what happened to them, and a second time for having no father or husband to speak to. I too “will surely hear” both this and the second cry!

## A Pile of Material

It is written in the Haftorah for Parsha Tzav, “For I did not speak to your fathers, nor command them in the day I brought them out of the land of

Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices” (Jeremiah 7:22).

The Maggid of Dubno asks: Is Hashem complaining that we are offering sacrifices to Him? Is this not what He commanded us to do? True, we were not told of this on the very day that He took us out of Egypt. However He did command this on Mount Sinai several months later, and the entire book of Leviticus, as well as half the book of Numbers, deals with the subject of offerings. Therefore how could Hashem say that He did not command such things? The Maggid answers with a parable: A man made an agreement with a builder to construct a two-story, seven-room house on some land that he owned. After they had signed a contract, the man told his friends what he had done. However they ridiculed his plans: “That’s not the way to make a deal! The builder is going to use the lowest-quality materials for your house! Go sign a technical document with him that describes all the materials that are to be used in the construction, meaning the kinds of bricks, stones, pipes, doors, and filling material for the house.” The man quickly went to see the builder with a detailed list of the materials that were to be used. The builder asked him, “And what about paying me?” The man replied, “When I receive the keys to my house, you’ll receive your money.” After three months the builder went to see the man and told him that everything was ready. He even brought the keys to his new house! “Now you have to pay me,” the builder added. Needless to say, the man was surprised: “What? You’ve only been working for three months!” The builder assured the man, “Come and see for yourself!” Thus they both went to the construction site, and there the builder showed the man all the materials for the house, everything arranged in rows: “Here are the stones, pipes, and water taps. The beams are on the other side, and all your technical details have been met. Now, please pay me.” The man answered, “Excuse me, but we’re talking about a house here – not a pile of material! We signed a contract for the construction of a two-story, seven-room house. The technical details describe what you would use to build the house, but the contract stipulates that you still have to build a house.” This is what Hashem said to Israel: Upon what condition did I agree to take you out of Egypt? On the condition that you would be My servants! You have asked how, and I have told you how in detail: Through burnt-offerings, the observance of Shabbat every week, Yom Kippur once a year, and so on. These are the technical details. However it was not My intention that you should focus only on the details! This is the meaning of, “For I did not speak to your fathers, nor command them in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices.” When we left Egypt, we were given basic principles such as: “The Children of Israel are servants to Me” and “You shall be My own treasure among all peoples.”

– Aish Dat

### Overview of the Parsha

Parsha Mishpatim lays the foundation for the civil laws of Hashem’s people, who had just received the Torah. These regulations begin with the laws regarding the Hebrew slave, meant to protect the liberty of a Jew’s life. It continues with the laws regarding corporal punishment, meant to protect the liberty of a Jew’s body. Following these are the laws related to property, meant to protect a Jew’s possessions, and moral laws, meant to protect the general rights of individuals in society. We then find laws concerning society in general, commandments regulating collective conduct with respect to Shabbat, the Sabbatical year, the three holiday pilgrimages, and so on. Hashem then gives His pledge of protection upon entering the land, assuring us that “I will drive them out before you” (Exodus 23:30). We also read of blessings of abundance if we observe His laws. The parsha ends by describing the commandment to ascend the mountain, the establishment and reading of the covenant between Hashem and His people, and the sprinkling of the people with the blood of their burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

## REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

### The Way to the Duke

It is written, “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil” (Exodus 23:2).

In his book *Kovetz Ma’amarim*, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman Zatzal asks a well-known question: The Jewish people are but a minority among the peoples of the world, non-Jews constituting the overwhelming majority. Therefore why do the Jewish people not accept their religion, since the Torah tells us to follow the majority? Rabbi Wasserman responds by saying that the rule to follow the majority applies to judges carrying out their roles. Since the Torah states, “A bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy 16:19), we must go according to the majority. This is said only when the judges are upright men, having no vested interest in the case before them, for then they are completely objective. As a result, if the majority is comprised of those who have a vested interest in a case (while the minority do not), we obviously go according to the minority. Insofar as faith and religion are concerned, a person cannot correctly judge matters if he has a vested interest in one side, meaning that his drives and desires blind him to the truth. Among all the nations of the world, who is free of desires or aspirations, such that he can clearly understand the truth? Thus we are left with the words of our Sages, numbering in the thousands and tens of thousands, all of whom were untainted and uninterested in personal gain. It is precisely because of the rule to follow the majority that we must follow their decisions, given that they are a majority of judges, unbiased and unaffected by self-interest. Hence the truth is with them.

We can learn something more from the words of Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshutz Zatzal, namely that this rule only applies when a doubt exists, not in a clear-cut case. Now since we have no doubts about our religion, no majority can persuade us to abandon it. In regards to this subject, the story is told of Rabbi Yitzchak Aryeh Wormser Zatzal, the Baal Shem of Michelstadt, who even as a boy was known to be remarkably intelligent. The duke of the city, who had heard of the boy’s renown, invited him to visit his palace, a luxurious estate with a great number of rooms, corridors, and halls. Before the nine-year-old boy arrived, however, the duke ordered everyone in the palace to leave. He did this in order to prevent him from asking for directions to the duke’s room. Thus the boy, who found himself all alone in the palace courtyard, was troubled for a moment. However with his keen intelligence, he looked around and noticed that all the windows to the rooms were open, except for one that was covered by a curtain. Thus the boy made his way to that particular room and found the duke waiting for him there. During their conversation, the duke asked him: “Why, when it comes to religion, do you not follow the majority?” He answered, “When I arrived here, if all your servants had told me to find you in another room, I would not have believed them, for I clearly knew with absolute certainty where you were. Likewise, the principle of following the majority only applies in cases where there is a doubt. When we possess clear knowledge that runs counter to the view of the majority – there being no personal interest, bias, or doubt involved – then we do not follow the majority, for it is written: ‘You shall not follow a multitude to do evil.’ It is the truth that we follow.”

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### Jehoiada the Priest

It is written, "Jehoiada then sealed the covenant between the L-RD and the king and the people, to be a people of the L-RD" (II Kings 11:17).

Jehoiada was an influential priest during the time of the First Temple, being related to the royal house of David through his wife Jehosheba. When Ahab's daughter Athaliah ascended to the throne, she decided to wipe out all the descendants of David's line. However Jehosheba saved Joash (still a baby at the time) by hiding him for six years in a chamber above the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Meanwhile Jehoiada developed alliances with officials in charge of the Temple and the royal house, and in the seventh year of Joash's life, Jehoiada anointed him as the people's king in the House of G-d, sealing a pact with the people stipulating that they would serve Hashem. The vestiges of Baal worship were then eliminated from the kingdom, and Hashem's service was reestablished. Jehoiada supervised the restoration of the Temple in the name of the king, and he also instituted new ways of allocating funds for the Temple's restoration. He instituted a procedure by which money was no longer to be given over to the priests, as had previously been done. He instead decided to put the money into a special chest, and from there it was passed on to the treasurers responsible for the Temple's restoration so they could pay for the necessary work. The Sages heaped tremendous praise on the greatness of Jehoiada the priest, as it is written: "Rabbi Berekiah said: It is written, 'And Jehoiada was the leader of Aaron' [I Chronicles 12:27]. Was then Jehoiada the leader of Aaron? The meaning, however, is that if Aaron had lived in the same generation as Jehoiada, the latter in his time would have been superior to him" (Ecclesiastes Rabba 1:4§4).

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Nathan Tzvi Finkel – The Alter of Slabodka

The gaon Rabbi Nathan Tzvi Finkel Zatzal was born in the tiny Lithuanian town of Rasei in the year 5609. From his youth he was known as an illui (genius), a child prodigy. As he grew older, he was among those close to the gaon Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv of Kelm, the disciple of Rabbi Israel Salanter (the founder of the Mussar movement). Although Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv appointed Rabbi Nathan Tzvi as the director of the Kelm Talmud Torah, he did not rest upon his laurels. In fact he began establishing numerous yeshivot throughout Poland and Lithuania. In 5637 Rabbi Nathan Tzvi helped establish the famous Telshe yeshiva, while at the same time he set up the Kovno kollel. It was there that remarkable avrechim perfected themselves, and where the Mussar movement produced tzaddikim.

Rabbi Nathan Tzvi went on to establish the Slabodka yeshiva, the crown jewel of yeshivot. It was to the Slabodka yeshiva, which Rabbi Nathan Tzvi saw as his great goal in life, that he sent famous gaonim to teach. Nevertheless, he did not neglect other yeshivot, for he cared for his students as a father for his children.

When the First World War began, Rabbi Nathan Tzvi was forced to leave Slabodka, traveling with his students to Minsk, and from there to Kremenchug. In 5684 a portion of his yeshiva students left for Hebron, where the yeshiva continued under the direction of his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Epstein. It remained there until 5689, when Arabs committed the infamous Hebron massacre. Because Rabbi Nathan Tzvi was so concerned for his students, he became known as the Alter ("elder," i.e., father) of Slabodka. He passed away on Shevat 29, 5687. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed.

## A MATTER OF EDUCATION

### Eating Meat – But with Sensitivity

It is written, "The festival of unleavened bread...the festival of weeks...and the festival of ingathering at year's end...you shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven...you shall bring the first of the firstfruits of your land...you shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Exodus 34:18-26).

Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra said that it is cruel to cook a kid in the milk of its mother, just as the Torah tells us, "An ox or a sheep or goat, you may not slaughter it and its offspring on the same day" (Leviticus 22:28) and, "You shall not take the mother [bird] with the young" (Deuteronomy 22:6). Like Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra, some commentators try to explain the proximity of the three festivals to the three commandments that follow it. That is, "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven" corresponds to the festival of unleavened bread; "You shall bring the first of the firstfruits of your land" corresponds to the festival of weeks; and "You shall not boil a kid in his mother's milk" corresponds to the festival of ingathering. In other words, it is true that at the end of the agricultural year Hashem gives us a harvest of plant life so as to satiate the hungry soul and fill it with good things. However we must not think that, just as Hashem made us masters over plant life, so too did He make us masters over animals, meaning that we can do with them as we want, without any consideration for the dignity of animal life. On the contrary, just as we are forbidden to take the fruits of a tree during its first three years of growth, so too are we limited in terms of what we may do with animal life, which we cannot use to excess. It would be arrogant on our part to eat an animal by cooking it in what it uses to nurse its young, namely milk.

Concerning the statement in Parsha Re'eh, "To your heart's desire you may slaughter and eat meat" (Deuteronomy 12:15), the Sages have said: "The Torah here teaches a rule of conduct, that a person should not eat meat unless he has a special appetite for it" (Chullin 84a). Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that eating meat depends on the appetite of the soul. This means that we must understand the permission to eat meat only as a leniency afforded to man's desires. Such permission was not given to man until the time of Noah, the custodian of all living creatures in the ark. This is in contrast to plant life, which was given to Adam to eat at the time of his creation. The Sages of the Gemara say that both an ignoramus and one who fails to study Torah have no right to eat meat (Pesachim 49b). Hence in terms of education geared towards the refinement of the soul, we must infuse the idea that man's consumption of meat is not something that is automatic. Thus when children come home to eat, their first question should not be, "What kind of meat are we eating?"

## A TRUE STORY

### The Doctor Who Knew About Eyes

It is written, "Only for his lost time shall he pay, and he shall cause him to be healed" (Exodus 21:19).

Rabbi Shemuel Salanter (d. 5669) served as the Rav of Jerusalem for close to 70 years. He was involved in everything that happened in Eretz Israel, and he also answered Halachic questions from all around the world, doing everything with extreme wisdom. Rabbi Shemuel would usually try to console Jews who were obligated to eat on Yom Kippur for health reasons. He once said to an ailing man, "It is true that you are ill and not obligated to observe certain mitzvot. However you must still observe the mitzvah of, 'You shall greatly beware for your souls' [Deuteronomy 4:15]. To observe it you must eat so as to guard your soul." The elders of Jerusalem said that there was a man who went to see Rabbi Shemuel Salanter because his eyes were hurting him. He asked the Rav what he should do on Yom Kippur, and the Rav sent him to a non-Jewish eye doctor for advice. The man, however, decided to go see a Jewish doctor, who examined him and concluded that he could fast on Yom Kippur as he usually did. The man therefore fasted, but his eyesight was damaged as a result, and he only recovered with great difficulty. When the man eventually told Rabbi Shemuel Salanter what had happened, the Rav let out a sigh and said, "I sent you to a doctor who didn't know about Yom Kippur, but he did know about eyes. However you went to a doctor who knew about Yom Kippur, but didn't know anything about eyes or how to treat them!"