

# THE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF THE TZADDIK EXTENDS TO EVERY JEW (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

**I**t is written, “And you, command the Children of Israel that they shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually” (Exodus 27:20). This verse raises some questions. First of all, why does it begin with the expression, “And you, command”? This is unlike other places in the Torah, where we usually find expressions such as, “And the L-RD spoke to Moses” or “And the L-RD said to Moses.”

We should ask ourselves another question: Since this oil was to be brought to light the Menorah, should it not have been written, “Let them take for Me pure olive oil,” similar to the statement in Parsha Terumah: “Let them take for Me an offering” (Exodus 25:2) – not “for you”? Now it is said, “All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven, as it is written: ‘In all your ways know Him’ [Proverbs 3:6]” (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 231:1). Furthermore the Sages have said, “Let all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven” (Perkei Avoth 2:12), which includes things that concern daily living, things such as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, and whatever else pertains to the needs of the body. Everything should be done to serve the Creator, or as things that lead to serving Him.

We need to understand how a person can be expected to completely focus on the Creator of the universe all day long. Since he is made of flesh and blood, how can he think only of the Creator throughout the day?

A human being goes through numerous trials in life, some of which are minor, as fine as a human hair. Yet the evil inclination makes such trials bigger and more numerous in a person’s eyes. On the other hand, each trial and every act of the evil inclination seems significant to the tzaddikim, for with regards to their strength and holiness, they perceive everything evil – regardless of how small – as being significant, meaning that it can lead to sin. The tremendous holiness of the tzaddikim leads them to consider the immense value of everything they do, which enables us to understand why the evil inclination puts so much effort into making the tzaddikim stumble even in minor things. Thus to them, such things appear as large as a mountain.

A person needs to grow spiritually, however, and it is not enough for him just to offer his money to Hashem. He must also make himself like an offering, much as Rashi says on the verse: “Korach took” (Numbers 16:1). That is, “He took himself to one side.” The same applies here: “Let them take for Me an offering” – let them also take themselves with the offering. In other words, an offering has to be given with complete devotion, which makes its imprint on the offering itself. Therefore whoever sees it will sense that it was given wholeheartedly.

This may seem surprising, for does a person have the strength to overcome the daunting task of having to annul his desires, to the point of taking himself as an offering? Since the evil inclination constantly tries to make a person stumble, how can he truly take himself as an offering for Hashem?

This is why the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: “And you, command... that they shall take for you” (Exodus 27:20). This means that for the Children of Israel to arrive at the level of “Let them take for Me” – taking themselves without reservation in the service of Hashem and eliminating all material desires from their heart – there must first be the concept of “for you.”

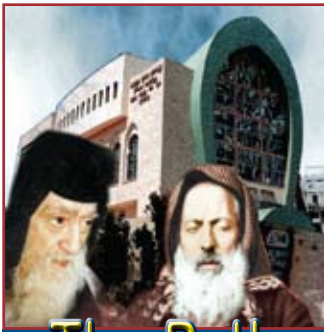
We shall attempt to explain: First, the Children of Israel must learn from you (Moses) that you have a spiritual influence on them, for you teach them Torah and the fear of Heaven. In fact when they see you serving Me, they will learn how to yield before Me. They will learn how they must serve Me with all their heart, until they themselves arrive at the level of “let them take for Me.”

It was obvious to see the fear of Heaven in Moses (Berachot 33b), so much so that he could teach it to the Children of Israel. All this was because in seeing a holy figure who serves Hashem, they would learn and be influenced by him. Since he is entirely taken by G-d, they would also be taken by Him. Their hearts would be filled with a sacred enthusiasm to take themselves for Hashem, with all their heart and soul.

It is not without reason that Hashem chose Moses as a role model for the Jewish people. In fact the tzaddik of the generation is as valuable as all of Israel combined, as the Sages have said: “Moses was equal to all Israel” (Mechilta d’Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Shemot 18; Tanhuma, Beshalach 10). He therefore had the ability to influence and spread his glory upon them, and they would also fear him, as it is said: “Let the... reverence for your teacher [be] as the fear of Heaven” (Perkei Avoth 4:12).

However in order for everyone to gather around the tzaddik and be influenced by him, there must be ve’ata (“and you”). The vav adds to what preceded it, meaning that only when the tzaddik encompasses the aspect of “let them take for Me” – only when he is taken by Hashem and loves Him wholeheartedly – will he then automatically be able to influence others. In this way the souls of the Jewish people will cling to him, giving everyone a tremendous spiritual elevation.

Why does all this happen, and through whose merit does it take place? The tzaddik of the generation merits that the Holy One, blessed be He, speaks through him, for he is taken by Hashem and shines upon the entire generation. People learn to fear Hashem by looking to him, for on his face they see the light of the Shechinah. It is Hashem’s will for us to enthusiastically cleave to him with a fiery devotion. From here we see that man has the power to annul his whims and desires, and to demonstrate that he is stronger than the desires of this world. However this only happens when he is “taken” for Hashem. As such we can rid ourselves of the feeling that we ourselves are strong, for we are “taken” solely for Hashem. If we truly act in this way, we will merit all that is good in both the material and spiritual realms.



## The Path To Follow TETZAVEH

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### GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

#### Judging People Fairly

A person who is recounting the character traits of another should be careful not to describe them in a distorted or exaggerated way. Many people fall into this trap when they incorrectly interpret the character traits of others and go on to describe them in a derogatory way, which is unfair. For example, if a person is not sharp enough to realize when people are being deceitful, to the point that he is easily fooled, this trait is not inherently wrong. Some people, however, will see this person as a fool. Since such a view is unfair, one who tells others that he is a fool commits a serious transgression. This inaccurate description can cause him serious harm, either because nobody will want to marry him or for some other reason.

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## To Approach or Retreat?

*It is written, "It must be on Aaron in order to minister. Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary before the L-RD and when he leaves" (Exodus 28:35).*

Gold bells were sewn to the hem of the High Priest's robe. These bells were essentially designed for Yom Kippur, when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies. He would tremble at that point, for he knew that his life was at stake, since just one stray thought could lead to his death. This is why a long rope was attached to his leg, and as long as other people could hear the sound of the bells, they knew that he was still alive. However if they heard nothing, they knew that the High Priest was dead. Since it was forbidden for anyone other than the High Priest to enter the Holy of Holies, his body was pulled from there by means of the rope. That being said, we may ask why, if the bells were only designed for that holy day, the Torah commands them to be sewn to the garments that the High Priest wore every day?

We shall explain this by a question asked to the great Kohen of Radin, the Chafetz Chaim. The Chafetz Chaim normally wore a hat with a rim on the front, not the back. When he was asked why he didn't wear a round hat like every other rabbi, he said: "When I see a Jew from afar and he is wearing a round hat, I don't know if he is getting closer or farther. However with a hat like mine, people can tell what direction I'm headed in, even from a great distance, for the front of my hat differs from the back." A Jew must know where he stands, if he is going forward or backward. The Chafetz Chaim's words answer our question: The bells were also useful throughout the year, for even a Jew with the stature of the High Priest had to know where he stood.

Every Jew must know his place in the service of Hashem, lest he try to attain levels that are not yet appropriate for him. As Mar Ukva said, "In this matter I am as vinegar is to wine compared to my father: For if my father were to eat meat now he would not eat cheese until this very hour tomorrow, whereas I do not eat [cheese] in the same meal, but I do eat it in my next meal" (Chullin 105a). It seems reasonable to ask if Mar Ukva was unable to abstain from eating a dairy meal for an entire day. The answer is that he understood that it is not wise to act on a level that one is not yet at. Such behavior stems from pretense, which is not Hashem's way. Everyone must know where he stands and the level he is at.

However we must be careful here, for just as we can falsely assume that we are at a higher level, we can also falsely assume that we are at a lower one. We must not look down on ourselves by assuming that we are at level that is below our actual capabilities. We must realize that we stand "before the L-RD," Who knows precisely what level we are at, and Whose demands are commensurate with that level.

## A Pearl From the Rav

In his book *Pahad David*, Rabbi David Pinto Shlita asks why Moses' name does not appear anywhere in this week's parsha. Furthermore, why does the beginning of the parsha deal with the pure olive oil? The answer is that the soul of Moses extends to every generation, and every soul among the Jewish people is connected to his. Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: "You represent the pure olive oil, the soul of every Jew. Therefore how can it be crushed? How can I erase your name? In that case the

Children of Israel would no longer have anyone to cleave to! It is preferable for them to repent, and then you can connect them to yourself and bring them into the light of the Torah."

## Moses' Name

*It is written, "And you, command the Children of Israel" (Exodus 27:20).*

There are 101 verses in this parsha, the numerical value of the name Michael. The reason behind this is that the name missing from the parsha ("Moses") has an equivalent value of 101. That is, the nistar of the letter mem is mem, whose numerical value is 40. The nistar of the letter shin is yud nun, having a combined numerical value of 60. Finally the nistar of the letter hei is aleph, with a numerical value of one. Combined, this comes to 101. This alludes to the fact that although Moses is hidden to us from the outside (a reference to his holy body), his inner characteristics (meaning his spirituality, the spirituality of the holy Torah that he taught us) are still with us, and they always will be.

– Peninim MiShulchan HaGra

## My Heart Tells Me

*It is written, "These are the vestments that they shall make: A breastplate, an Ephod..." (Exodus 28:4).*

Rashi states, "An Ephod. I have not heard, nor have I found in the Beraita any explanation of its form. But my heart tells me that it was something tied behind him, its width being the same as the width of the back of a man, like a sort of apron...which ladies of the nobility attach when riding horses."

What did Rashi mean by, "My heart tells me," and why did he compare the Ephod to what "ladies of the nobility attach when riding horses"? It is said that Rashi was leaving the Beit Midrash one day when he saw a lady of the nobility riding toward him on horseback. It was difficult for Rashi to understand how it was possible for his eyes, which he was extremely careful with, to have witnessed such a spectacle. Yet later on, as he was working on an explanation for the shape of the Ephod, he could not find anything about it in the Beraita. It was then that he remembered this incident and wrote: "My heart tells me." That is, it wasn't without reason that Hashem had tried him by the sight of a woman on horseback. It was meant to teach him about the Ephod, showing him how it was shaped.

– Torat HaParasha

## Leshem, Shevo, Ve'Achlamah

*It is written, "The third row: Leshem, shevo, ve'achlamah" (Exodus 28:19).*

There are some people who see nothing good in themselves, yet they will boast over the virtues of their relatives. This is a completely erroneous attitude to have, for a person's value lies in himself, not in his family. This idea can be found in our verse: Leshem – the shem (name) of a person is judged by what is shevo (in him). Yet if he possesses nothing good in himself, but boasts over the virtues of others by saying that he is, for example, the ach (brother) of a certain rav, then ve'ach lamah ("why the brother")?

## How Not to Forget

*It is written, "As a constant remembrance before the L-RD" (Exodus 28:29).*

One day a chassid came to visit Rabbi Yehudah Tzvi of Sechnin Zatzal. The chassid was weeping bitter tears as he said, "Our holy Rebbe! I study and forget, study and forget! May the Rebbe give me a Segula for the angel of forgetfulness not to have power over me!"

# REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

## It All Depends on Us

*It is written, “They shall take for you pure, pressed olive oil for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually” (Exodus 27:20).*

In Europe there was a wealthy man who gave generous donations for every sanctified cause, especially when it came to Rabbi Chaim's yeshiva. Whenever he was asked for a contribution, he opened his hand and gave a large donation.

One day an envoy from the yeshiva came to see him, and contrary to usual the man gave a very small donation. Surprised by the small amount, the envoy asked him about it. Perhaps his business was not doing so well, and he had decided to lower his expenses?

The wealthy man replied, “My business is doing very well, thank G-d. However the last time someone came to ask me for a donation for the yeshiva, I noticed that he traveled by private coach, rather than using less expensive transportation to lower the yeshiva's expenses. I'm not interested in having my money go to feeding horses. Whatever donations I've given is because I respect the value of Torah, and I want to have a share in it. I want to see my money going into Torah, not into feeding horses.” The envoy replied, “Every yeshiva has its expenses, and apart from Torah studies every yeshiva must support an entire infrastructure that allows its students to knock at the gates of Torah every single day. The envoy you saw needed private transportation in order to save time and enable every willing Jew to participate in supporting the yeshiva. It all depends on whether your intention is true and sincere when you give a donation. If you understand the value of Torah, then the Holy One, blessed be He, will arrange things such that your money will go to nourishing yeshiva students or to purchasing books. However if a person gives with superficial intentions, then his money will go to feeding horses. It all depends on the giver.”

When we approach a poor person to give him money, or when we give a donation for a sanctified cause, we must ensure that our intentions are pure and sincere. We must also give with a cheerful face and realize the true importance of giving. We must not give just for the sake of appearances or for others to admire us. This is alluded to in the verse, “They shall take for you.” That is, when they give for the needs of the Sanctuary, they must realize that if the oil – the tzeddakah – is “pure, pressed,” meaning without any degrading ulterior motives and free of all feelings of pride and other forbidden thoughts, then it will be “for illumination, to kindle the lamp continually.” Hashem will guide this offering and ensure that it reaches the Menorah to kindle the lamp forever. It all depends on us.

## EISHET CHAYIL

### One Year that Turned into Sixty

After the engagement of the young Beila Hinda (the daughter of the wealthy Reb Shraga Feivel Frank) to Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, a brilliant young student from the Volozhin yeshiva, Rabbi Isser Zalman fell ill and required medical attention. He traveled to Kovno and underwent tests, and from there he was sent to recuperate at a health spa.

During this time, his fiancée was being pressured to cancel the engagement, for she was told that she didn't need a frail husband.

Yet in her wisdom, the girl refused to listen. When pressure began to mount, she asked the doctors for their opinion, and they told her that the youngster had no more than a year to live at most. When she heard that, she said, “Living for a year with a talmid chacham like him is an unbelievable opportunity.”

The two got married, and she took care of her husband as best she could. With G-d's help, she was his helper for sixty years, since Rabbi Isser Zalman rendered his pure soul to his Creator at the age of 84!

Rabbi Yehudah Tzvi replied, “It is written, ‘As a constant remembrance before Hashem.’ What is written earlier on in the parsha? ‘To kindle the lamp continually’ [Exodus 27:20]. You should also kindle in your home a lamp that continually burns in order to study by its light. There is no greater Segula than this against forgetfulness. Our Sages have taught us a great lesson here: ‘One who dreams of olive oil should attend to the light of Torah’ [i.e., he should study by the light of a lamp]. This is what Rashi explained: ‘Continually. Each and every night may be referred to as a tamid [continual burnt offering],’ for the night was created only for learning Torah.”

### Pituchei Chotam

*It is written, “Pituchei Chotam [Engravings of a signet]: Holy to the L-RD” (Exodus 28:36).*

We may say that this verse contains an allusion to a teaching found in the Gemara: “The Holy One, blessed be He, has retained three keys in His hands and has not entrusted them to any messenger, namely: The key to rain [matar], the key to childbirth [chaya], and the key to the resurrection of the dead [techiyat hameitim]” (Taanith 2a). Now we know that everything can be found in our Holy Torah. Hence pituchei recalls the word maphtechot (“keys”) and chotam (“signet”) is formed by the initials of chaya, techiyat, matar. Our verse therefore says that Pituchei chotam – these three keys – are “Holy to the L-RD,” for no one but Hashem controls them.

– Peninim MiShulchan HaGra

### Sometimes Silence, Just Like Lashon Harah, Requires Atonement

It is written, “A gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe, all around” (Exodus 28:34-35).

The Sages have said that the robe, which made a sound, atoned for the sin of Lashon Harah that occurred through speech. That being the case, asked the gaon Rabbi Hoenig of Brueghel, then why were there pomegranates to muffle the sound? Let there only be bells! He answers by saying that just as the sin of Lashon Harah occurs through speech, so too does it sometimes occur through silence. When someone needs some important information for business, a shidduch, or in the realm of Torah – information that is permissible, and even a mitzvah to give so as to prevent someone from getting hurt – yet the person with this information remains silent and uses the excuse that “Lashon Harah is forbidden,” this too is a sin, one atoned for by the pomegranates that muffle the sound.

### Overview of the Parsha

After the order was given in Parsha Terumah to build the Sanctuary and its vessels, Parsha Tetzaveh continues with the orders concerning other accessories needed for the service of the Sanctuary. The order is given to take oil for lighting the lamps of the Sanctuary, as well as to make the special garments of the priests. These include the Ephod, breastplate, and robe, as well as the High Priest's headplate and the garments worn by the ordinary priests. Orders were given concerning the holiness of the priests and the altar that would inaugurate the Sanctuary. The regular service is then described, with the daily burnt-offerings and instructions for the altar on which incense was to be burned, and whose fragrance would permeate the Sanctuary.



## Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Morgenstern of Pilov

In 5619, the year in which the Seraph of Kotzk passed away, a new branch was born into the house of Kotzk. Born in that year was Rabbi Moshe Mordechai, the son of Rabbi Chaim Israel, who was the son of Rabbi David of Kotzk, who in turn was the son of the Seraph of Kotzk. From his early youth, it was clear that Rabbi Moshe Mordechai had been born for greatness. Quiet by nature, he would remain enclosed in his room learning Torah for hours on end, to the point that he actually forgot that he had to eat. His meals were often brought to his room, and after several hours people realized that he still hadn't touched his food! His understanding and scholarship in Torah knew no bounds, and his method of study followed that of Kotzk, with a piercing intellect that sought to reach the truth. After the death of his father in 5665, Rabbi Moshe Mordechai began to lead the community from the small town of Pilov. It was then that he became known as an exceptional individual who had absolutely no interest in worldly matters. He was completely holy and passionate about serving his Creator. The lectures that he gave at his table were filled with fire, and the chassidim did not always understand them. In fact they sometimes had to receive explanations from his brother, Rabbi Yosef of Kotzk, who succeeded him as Rebbe.

Rabbi Moshe Mordechai was beset by illness during his final years, until in the year 5689 he was plagued by an illness from which he did not recover. On the night of Purim, Adar 14, he heard the reading of the Megillah in the Beit Midrash. He then asked that Shoshanat Yaakov be played, and after it had been played for a second time, his soul ascended to Heaven. His grave is located in the Warsaw cemetery, and a mausoleum erected over his grave still stands today. May his merit protect us all.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### Measure for Measure

*It is written, "That they may guard its entire form and all its ordinances, and fulfill them" (Ezekiel 43:11).*

What is the meaning of the expression, "That they may guard its entire form"? The Radak explains that the Holy One, blessed be He, warned the Children of Israel to guard within their heart, and with complete faith, the form of the Temple, meaning its architecture and details. This is because they will be called upon to implement all these details when the Redeemer arrives. If they fail to guard these things in their heart, and if they do not believe in the coming of Mashiach and the Third Temple, then they will not participate in its construction, for the Holy One, blessed be He, punishes man measure for measure. Thus whoever believes in the coming of the Redeemer will merit to be saved, and if he does not believe, Hashem will deal with him in like manner, meaning that he will not be saved. Similarly, if a person does not believe in the resurrection of the dead, he will not be resurrected. It is said that great Torah figures such as the Chafetz Chaim had special clothes set aside in order to meet Mashiach, and every day they truly hoped to meet him. Everyone according to his degree of faith will soon merit, G-d willing, to witness the Final Redemption. If a person is among those who guarded the form of the Temple within their heart, and whose faith in its construction is therefore deeply rooted in him, Hashem will resurrect him before the construction of the Third Temple in order to let him participate in its completion.

### Annul!

*It is written, "Its sound shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary" (Exodus 28:35).*

The Russian army had decided to lay siege to the city of Vilna. When the patience of the attackers was exhausted, they launched a terrible attack against the city. Although bombs and bullets fell like rain, the authorities of Vilna had no intention of surrendering. A grave danger hovered over the city and the Jews who lived there, a fact that its Jewish leaders were well aware of. They proclaimed a day of fasting, and in short time news of this proclamation spread through the city. Multitudes of Jews went to synagogue with shofar and book of Psalms in hand. The sound of their prayers and tears ascended to Heaven.

The Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu, approached the ark. He opened it and began to recite some psalms. His sacred voice could be heard saying, "May the L-RD answer you on the day of distress" (Psalms 20:2). Suddenly a thunderous sound was heard, for an enormous bomb was passing over the synagogue. The Gaon's voice could be heard saying: "Annul! Annul!" The bomb then lodged itself in the roof, but did not explode. This was the last bomb to drop on the city, for the sound of war was no longer heard. As it turned out, at the very instant that the Gaon had proclaimed, "Annul," a delegation from the authorities of Vilna had been sent to surrender to the Russian authorities, thereby ending the war.

## THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

### A Woman and Her Seven Children

There was once a tzaddik by the name of Benjamin, a man who helped others throughout his life. People called him "Benjamin the tzaddik," and on account of his honesty he was appointed as the supervisor of a charity fund.

A famine struck the land one year, making it extremely difficult for people to get food. In fact the needs of the poor so greatly outweighed contributions to tzedakah that the charity fund dried up, without even a cent remaining. A poor widow came to Benjamin the tzaddik pleading for help. Weakened and frail, she said to him: "Rabbi, please give me something to eat. I have seven children, poor orphans, and they're suffering from hunger!"

Although Benjamin the tzaddik had pity on this woman, he let out a sigh and said, "How can I help you? The charity fund is empty, without so much as a penny in it!"

The woman wept and cried out in desperation, "Rabbi, if you don't help, my seven children and I will starve to death!"

When Benjamin the tzaddik saw the distress of this poor woman, he realized that what she was saying was true. Although he was far from rich and the year had been extremely difficult, he still managed to feed this woman and her children from out of his own pocket, until the Holy One, blessed be He, had mercy and sent rain. After a certain time, Benjamin became dangerously ill and doctors were unable to help him. As he stood at the gates of death, the angels addressed Hashem and said: "Sovereign of the universe, You have said that he who preserves one soul of Israel is considered to have preserved the entire world. Therefore should Benjamin the tzaddik, who saved a woman and her seven children, die at so young an age?" Hashem accepted their plea, and Benjamin the tzaddik was given an additional 22 years to live, the same as the number of different letters in the Torah, from aleph to tav.

– Adapted from Bava Batra 11a