



The Path To Follow

VAYEISHEV

267

Dec. 20th 08

23 Kislev 5769

Publication

HEVRAT PINTO

Under Aegis of

RABBI DAVID HANANIA

PINTO CHLITA

11, rue du plateau

75019 PARIS

Tel: +331 42 08 25 40

Fax +331 42 08 50 85

www.hevratpinto.org

Responsible of publication
Hanania Soussan

GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

The Seven Orifices

A person can do more with his tongue than with a sword, for with his tongue he can be in one place and kill someone far away, whereas with a sword he can only kill someone nearby. Hence man was created with two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, but only one mouth – so as not to speak excessively.

The book Menorat HaMaor by Rabbi Israel states that man has seven orifices, corresponding to the seven branches of the Menorah. The mouth corresponds to the central branch, which is sacred. Hence a person must sanctify his mouth and tongue on Shabbat, which is both the seventh day and sacred, for everything that corresponds to the seventh is sacred.

– Reshith Chochma, Sha'ar HaKedusha 11

THE ONLY FREE MAN IS ONE WHO STUDIES TORAH (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

It is written, "Jacob dwelled in the land of his father's sojournings" (Genesis 37:1). Our Sages have said, "When the righteous wish to live in peace in this world, the Satan comes and accuses them: 'They are not content with what is in store for them in the hereafter, but they wish to live in peace even in this world!'" (Bereshith Rabba 84:3). When Jacob wanted to live in peace in this world, the Satan struck him through Joseph.

This passage was written to teach people the greatness of the words of our Sages, who said: "There is no free man except one who occupies himself with the study of Torah" (Pirkei Avoth 6:2). Let us examine the difference between the early generations and the later generations. The early generations devoted themselves entirely to Torah and did not turn away from its study for even a moment. As stated with regards to King David, the Angel of Death could not take his soul because his lips were moving at all times, and the Angel of Death does not have the right to interrupt a man when he studies (Shabbat 30b). It is also said (Midrash Tehillim 1) that David learned Torah with one study group after another in order to fulfill the verse, "From all my teachers I grew wise" (Psalms 119:99).

Similar to this concept is the statement by our Sages: "Torah scholars have no rest, neither in this world nor in the World to Come" (Berachot 64a). Rashi explains that they proceed from one yeshiva to the next and from one Beit Midrash to another. Rabbi Yochanan said of himself, "In my case [it is a profanation if] I walk four cubits without Torah or tefillin" (Yoma 86a). It is also said, "A scholar is forbidden to stand in a place of filth, because he must not stand still without meditating on Torah" (Berachot 24b). We also read, "It was reported about Rabbi Eleazar ben Harsom that his father left him 1,000 cities on the continent, as well as 1,000 boats on the sea. Every day he would take a sack of flour on his shoulder and go from city to city and from province to province in order to study Torah" (Yoma 35b). In the Midrash our Sages cite Hashem as saying, "Torah scholars who force themselves to go from city to city and from country to country in order to study Torah, I exempt them from the yoke of government" (Midrash Otiyot). Thus the early generations gave themselves no rest in the study of Torah and performance of mitzvot. Even the wealthy among them went from place to place in order to study Torah, not diverting their attention from learning for even an instant.

As for the later generations, they do exactly the opposite: During the summer, people put religious concerns aside and neglect the study of Torah in order to go on vacation. Even when they leave their homes for a vacation destination, when they return they immediately want to rest and relax some more, for they are never content with however many vacations they may have in life. Why is that so? It is because the soul of a Jew can never be satisfied by this fleeting life and its pleasures, but only by eternal life and the study of Torah. Whoever studies Torah does not need a vacation, for the Torah itself constitutes the greatest freedom that exists. As for those who fail to study it, even if they were to spend all their time on vacation, it would still not be enough, for the

Sages said: "Exile yourself to a place of study" (Pirkei Avoth 4:14), not "Exile yourself on a vacation."

People of earlier generations felt at peace despite never resting from the study of Torah. Why was this so? They felt at peace because they studied Torah, as it is written: "These are the generations of Noah – Noah..." (Genesis 6:9). This teaches us that whenever Noah wanted to rest (nach) from Torah study, he would continue studying. Concerning the saintly Rabbi Chaim of Sanz Zatzal, it is said that at the end of Yom Kippur, when he felt exhausted after an entire day of pouring out his soul to Hashem, he told his assistants that he wanted to rest a little, and he proceeded into his room. When they followed behind to see what he was doing, they saw him leafing through a Gemara (tractate Sukkah) and studying it from the very first page, not moving from there during all the time they were watching him. They went back home to sleep, and the next morning they returned to the Rav's room and saw him with his book still open, near the end of the tractate. He had studied during the entire night!

This was how the tzaddikim rested after an exhausting Yom Kippur – through the study of Torah. Why did they do this? It is because they only find rest through words of Torah, not needing physical rest but rather spiritual rest.

We also find that our Sages said, "Our ancestors were never left without a yeshiva. In Egypt they had a yeshiva... In the wilderness they had a yeshiva" (Yoma 28b). It is difficult to understand why they needed a yeshiva, for were they unable to study Torah by themselves? Regarding this subject, it is said that Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph in order "to set up [lehorot] before him" (Genesis 46:28) – meaning to set up a house of study for the words of Torah, a place where the tribes could study. This is surprising, for could Jacob not have studied at home? Why did he need a yeshiva?

From here we learn that the only free man is one who studies Torah. The early generations, even if they did not leave their homes for a vacation, did indeed find rest. How did they find it? It was by studying Torah. They studied only in a yeshiva, for a yeshiva is a place of rest, as the Sages have said: "The word yeshiva means dwelling" (see Megillah 21a). Hence they rested by the very fact that they studied in one yeshiva after another. As for the later generations, even when going on vacation after vacation, they still do not find rest. This is normal, for the only free person is one who studies Torah, and his soul can only be satisfied by its words.

Generally speaking, a person cannot remain at rest in this world. This is an ancient decree, as it is written: "Man is born for toil" (Job 5:7). When he seeks rest, hardship comes and hinders him, depriving him of his rest. If he is worthy, the Torah will prevent him from resting; if he is unworthy, hardship will prevent him from resting. When a person studies Torah, however, he is liberated. Hence Jacob was punished when he wanted to settle down in peace. Hashem said to him, "You think that you can settle down in peace and study Torah in peace? By your life, I am sending disaster upon you that robs man of all his peace, makes him suffer, and does not allow him to rest in this world!"

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

The Two Sides of Jealousy

In his book *Kad Hakemach*, Rabbeinu Bechaye states that jealousy is a repugnant flaw that inflicts tremendous harm upon people and hinders them. However for a person whose heart is upright and pure, his bones will not rot. The Gemara tells us that Rabbi Nachman bar Yitzchak had a mound of earth in his vineyard, and he hired some workers to level it out. They spent the entire day digging, and as they continued to dig on the following day, a man leaped out of the earth, sat on what remained of the mound, and began to sway back and forth as he chimed, “Has the resurrection of the dead begun? Has the resurrection of the dead begun?” The workers ran and told Rabbi Nachman, who approached the man and said: “Who are you?” He replied, “I am one of the dead. Has the resurrection of the dead begun?” He said, “What are you doing on this mound of earth?” He replied, “I’ve just told you that I am dead!” Rabbi Nachman said, “Does a corpse not rot?” He replied, “Have you not studied the book of Proverbs? Did King Solomon not say, ‘Jealousy rots the bones’? Never in my life did I insist that I was right, nor did my heart ever harbor any jealousy” (see Shabbat 152b).

This teaches us that the bones of a person will not rot if his heart is free of jealousy. However a person who harbors jealousy in his heart, his bones will rot, as it is written: “Jealousy rots the bones.” Such jealousy pertains only to the vanities of the world, honor, wealth, and wicked deeds. However jealousy pertaining to Torah, mitzvot, and good deeds is commendable, as it is written: “The jealousy of scribes increases wisdom” (Bava Batra 21a). King Solomon enjoined us to adopt jealousy with regards to our fear of Heaven, as he said: “Let your heart not envy sinners, but the fear of the L-RD all day long” (Proverbs 23:17).

A Pearl From the Rav:

Man’s Garment is the Study of Torah

It is written, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, since he was a child of his old age, and he made him a fine woolen tunic. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him” (Genesis 37:3-4).

The Gemara states, “A man should never single out one son among his other sons, for on account of the two selas of silk that Jacob gave Joseph in excess of his other sons, his brothers became jealous of him and the matter resulted in our forefathers’ descent into Egypt” (Shabbat 10b). That being said, we need to understand why Jacob differentiated between Joseph and his other sons. He knew that the righteous Joseph would eventually go down and live in Egypt for many years, which is why he prepared him to resist the impurity of that land. How did Jacob prepare him? It was by the study of Torah, as our Sages have said: “All the laws that Shem and Eber handed down to Jacob, he transmitted to him [Joseph]” (Bereshith Rabba 84:8). By the fact that he studied with him, Jacob clothed him with a garment of Torah, and it was by this garment that Joseph was able to maintain his righteousness in Egypt. Hence Jacob transmitted everything that he himself had received from Shem and Ever, and he also clothed Joseph with a woolen tunic, alluding to the fact that in the future he would descend into Egypt and have to confront impurity there.

This garment is therefore the one with which Hashem clothed the first man after the sin, as it is written: “The L-RD G-d made coats of skin [ohr: ayin-vav-resh] for Adam and his wife” (Genesis 3:21). The Midrash states that in Rabbi Meir’s Torah it is written “coats of light [ohr: aleph-vav-resh],” a reference to Adam’s garments (Bereshith Rabba 20:12). This is surprising, since it would seem that the evil inclination did not attempt to make man stumble before the sin, for only afterwards did it begin to entice him. From then on, man had difficulty seeing how he could protect himself from it, and the Holy One, blessed be He, clothed him in a garment of light, as it is written: “By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Now bread always designates Torah, and through its study a person can merit a garment of honor and resist the evil inclination.

On the Contrary!

It is written, “Joseph dreamed a dream that he recounted to his brothers, and they hated him even more” (Genesis 37:5).

He recounted it to his brothers, and in this way he proved that he considered them to be his friends, for a person does not describe his dreams to those who hate him. However his brothers believed that he was lying, for they considered him to be their enemy, which is why they continued to hate him.

– Be’er Mayim Chaim

Royalty is Servitude

It is written, “His brothers said to him, ‘Will you indeed reign over us, or will you govern us?’” (Genesis 37:8).

This doublet (“reign” and “govern”) can be understood according to those who say that leading a community does not constitute an honor, but rather servitude. Thus when Joseph’s brothers saw that he was joyfully recounting his dream to them, they rightly said: “Will you indeed reign over us, or will you govern us?” In other words, “If you think that royalty will bring you honor, and you are happy as a result, then you should realize that you will actually be enslaving yourself in this way.”

– Chatam Sofer

“Will you indeed reign over us?” Even if you think that you will reign over us, a king only reigns over his people, for with his brothers he acts like a brother. How can you even think that you will govern us to the point that we will bow before you? Will you rule over your own brothers? Everything you have said must be completely contrived!

– Ketav Sofer

It may be that Joseph’s brothers were bothered by the way that he spoke, for a person who asks his friend for something normally does so in the form of a request. Joseph, however, said “listen now” (Genesis 37:6), meaning that he was demanding that they listen. They were therefore justified in saying that expressing oneself by giving orders is how kings speak. In other words: “Is it because you will ‘reign over us’ in the future, that you must ‘govern us’ in the present, demanding that we listen to you?” Hence they continued to hate Joseph because of his dreams, and also because of the way that he spoke to them when he said “listen now,” as if issuing an order.

– Kanfei Nesharim

Dreams Follow the Mouth

It is written, “His brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter [in mind]” (Genesis 37:11).

The Sages say that all dreams follow the mouth. Even a good dream

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

The Miracle of Chanukah

The ancient Greeks enacted decrees against the Torah for 52 years. When did things change? Where was the seed from which deliverance sprang? The Sefat Emet points out some words that occur in the thanksgiving prayer of Al HaNissim, which he presents as the key to our miraculous deliverance: “When the wicked Hellenic government rose up against Your people to make them forget Your Torah.” In other words, when these decrees became an obsessive battle for the admitted goal of completely uprooting the Torah, the situation itself became the seed, the very reason for complete deliverance. That is, as long as there is no real and immediate danger that their aims will be achieved, decrees are allowed to be enacted against the Jewish people for a reason, namely because they have abandoned the service of Hashem. However this only happens when efforts to uproot the Torah do not become serious. As soon as such efforts turn into an all-out war against the Torah, Hashem’s eternal promise comes into effect: “My words, which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth or from the mouth of your children” (Isaiah 59:21). For 52 years, the decrees that the ancient Greeks enacted against Jews still allowed for the existence of an eternal Torah and an eternal people. However when the Greeks became the stronger of the two, they and those who assimilated among them represented a clear threat to the existence of the Torah and the people of the Torah. Hence the pinnacle of their suffering was precisely the time of their salvation. This was in order for the Torah not to be forgotten, not under any circumstances! It will simply not happen. In that case miracles and wonders will occur, and all the forces of evil will vanish like smoke.

The Sefat Emet adds another explanation here: We must still praise Hashem for this, for the fact that His wonders and thoughts are directed towards us, and that He saves us for various reasons when He sees the merit of the Jewish people diminishing. Hashem gave the wicked such power that they tried to wipe out the entire Torah. By that very fact, His anger was aroused against them and brought about their downfall.

He ends by saying that the Jewish people must obviously believe that the power of the nations and their wicked decrees are directed by Divine providence for the ultimate good of the Jewish people. We must have faith in Hashem and believe that He will transform our cruel exile into something good, speedily and in our days. Amen.

ESHET HAYIL

A Woman’s Life

A woman should demonstrate the following characteristics in everything she does: She should be modest, remain within the home, and not leave without a pressing reason. She should not speak excessively with her neighbors, nor should she go to their homes except for something that is urgently needed. She should put an effort into seeing to the needs of her home and raising her children, and she should pray throughout the day for her husband to succeed in everything he does and for her children to grow in Torah and mitzvot. She should also give tzeddakah from the work of her hands. If she needs to go out, she should not venture into the busy streets with crowds of people, but instead she should take the lesser used roads. When she is at a wedding or in synagogue, she should try to sit with righteous women. She should not speak excessively, and she should remain seated modestly and discreetly.

– Reshith Chochma

that is interpreted to the detriment of the dreamer will turn into a curse for him. Now Joseph’s dream was actually good, but his brothers ridiculed it and failed to give it a positive interpretation. Therefore how could his dream be fulfilled? We must say that if they had simply stated, “Will you reign over us,” it certainly would not have occurred. However the Holy One, blessed be He, placed the double expression hamaloch timloch (“indeed reign”) in their mouths. Their father Jacob took this to heart, as well as the expression havo navo (“will we indeed come” [Genesis 37:10]), which he himself said.

– Ohr Torah

His Accounts

It is written, “It was on such a day that he entered the house to do his work” (Genesis 39:11).

Onkelos translated this verse as, “He entered the house to examine his accounts.” The Gemara states that Joseph emerged from prison on Rosh Hashanah (Rosh Hashanah 11a). This allusion is hidden in our verse. That is: “It was on such a day” – the day of Rosh Hashanah – “that he entered the house to do his work.” What work does a person do on Rosh Hashanah? Onkelos reveals the answer: He examines his accounts; he reflects upon his ways and repents. That is why Joseph merited to leave prison and govern.

– Ateret Paz

Everything is in the Hands of Heaven

It is written, “The prison warden did not inspect anything in [Joseph’s] hand, for the L-RD was with him, and whatever he did the L-RD made prosper” (Genesis 39:23).

In his commentary the Ramban writes, “The decree is true and haste is falsehood.” He also states that the story of Joseph (including everything that happened to him) teaches us that each time people wanted to harm him, Hashem changed their actions into something positive. Everything that Joseph endured led him along the path that the Holy One, blessed be He, had prepared for his good. Thus we read: “The prison warden did not inspect anything in his hand” – the warden saw and recognized that there was nothing “in his hand,” in man’s possession, and that man is incapable of doing anything – for in every circumstance “the L-RD was with him.” Everything that man achieves is only made possible by Hashem.

– Mussar HaBitachon

Overview of the Parsha

The era of Jacob’s children begins in this week’s parsha, which recounts the events surrounding Joseph and Judah. The unfolding of Jacob’s story begins with his son Joseph and the dreams that he has. When he recounts them to his brothers, they become so jealous that they eventually sell him into slavery. Before continuing with the subject of Joseph (Rachel’s son), the crown of his brothers who was separated from them, Scripture moves on to the story of Judah (Leah’s son), the leader of the brothers, who falls from greatness due to the incident involving Tamar. The parsha returns to the subject of Joseph, against whom Potiphar’s wife conspires and places in prison, where he interprets the dreams of Pharaoh’s servants.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger – The Author of Aruch LaNer

The yahrtzeit of the gaon Rabbi Yaakov Ettlinger Zatzal occurs this week. He was born in Karlsruhe, Germany in the year 5558 and died on Kislev 25, 5631. Although Rabbi Yaakov served as the rabbi of several German communities, he is best known as being the Rav of Altona. He fought courageously against the Reform movement, and he also made numerous disciples, including great Torah figures such as Rabbi Eziel Hildesheimer and Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch. Rav Yaakov's books became essential in studying Gemara and determining Halachah. Among these works are Aruch LaNer (a commentary on various Talmudic tractates), Bikurei Yaakov (on the laws concerning the festival of Sukkot), and Binyan Tzion (a book of responsa). He even spearheaded the publication of a Jewish newspaper in Germany entitled Der Getreue Zionswachter, with a Hebrew supplement called Shomer Tzion HaNe'eman.

Rabbi Chizkiya Da Silva – The Author of Pri Chadash

Occurring this week, Kislev 28 marks the passing of the author of Pri Chadash. In his book Shem HaGedolim, the Chida wrote: "The superb three-volume Pri Chadash and Mayim Chaim demonstrate the extent of his greatness in Torah. His scholarship is obvious to those who engage in Torah study. I have heard considerable praise for his greatness from the rabbis of Jerusalem. I have also heard from a pious man a few subjects that Pri Chadash deals with. Today, all the Torah scholars of Israel avidly drink in his words."

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

The Power of the Tongue

Rabban Gamliel was preparing a holiday meal, and he told his servant to cook various kinds of dishes and purchase whatever was needed. The servant went and purchased several cuts of tongue, roasting some and boiling others. Some of the pieces were tender, while others were hard. He presented the boiled ones first, followed by the roasted ones, the tender followed by the hard. Rabban Gamliel summoned him and said, "Why did you do this? Some pieces are tender and some are hard, some are roasted and some are boiled." He replied, "To make you realize that everything depends on the tongue, for sometimes it is good and tender, while other times it is bad and hard. If a person so desires, he can use it for the good, and likewise he can use it for the bad."

A king had several advisers who were wise and learned. One day the king noticed that one of his advisers, the wisest of them all, was sitting in silence. When the king asked him, "Why are you so quiet?" he replied: "I've thought it over, and I realize that things can be divided into four categories: Some are completely harmful, others are partly harmful and partly beneficial, still others are neither harmful nor beneficial, and finally others are completely beneficial." The first case involves a person who usually curses others. The second case involves a person who compliments those who can help him, although these very same compliments shame their enemies and harm those whom he compliments. The third case involves a person who usually speaks about things that are unimportant and useless, such as how a certain house was built, how much it cost, and stories of kings, princes, and so on. The fourth case involves the Torah and prophets, upon which life itself depends.

– Reshith Chochma, Sha'ar HaKedusha 11

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

The Sale of Joseph

It is written, "For three transgressions of Israel, yea for four I will not pardon them – for selling a righteous man for money" (Amos 2:6).

Commenting on Parsha Va'etchanan, the book Megaleh Amukot states that the sin of selling Joseph has still not been atoned for, and it continues to accuse. Hence Moses said, "E'brah [Let me pass over] please, to see the good land" (Deuteronomy 3:25). In other words: "I want these four sins – of which it is said, 'For four I will not pardon them' – to pass." By rearranging the letters of the word e'brah, we obtain arba'a ("four"), which is a serious accusation in Heaven. The Holy One, blessed be He, answered Moses: "Rav lecha [It is enough for you]!" The sale of the righteous Joseph – called rav ("great") – is yours; the sin belongs to you. Levi was primarily responsible for Joseph's sale, as we learn from the verse: "They said one to another [literally, 'a man to his brother']: Behold, that master of dreams comes. Come now, and let us kill him" (Genesis 37:18). Here the Sages have said, "These are Shimon and Levi, of whom it is said: 'Shimon and Levi are brothers' [Genesis 49:5]. 'One opened his sack' [Genesis 42:27] – this was Levi. Hence Hashem said to Moses: 'Speak to Me no more of this matter' [Deuteronomy 3:26]. The sin of selling Joseph is alluded to by the words 'this matter,' for concerning Joseph it is said: 'They left this place'" (Yalkut Shimoni 158).

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: "Ascend to the top of the cliff and raise your eyes westward, northward, southward, and eastward" (Deuteronomy 3:27). Hashem showed him all the generations, to the very last one. In each generation we have the ten martyrs of the kingdoms, which is why He told him to look in the four cardinal directions. These are the four kingdoms, to which the sparks of holiness of the ten martyrs have been scattered until the end of the generations, until the arrival of Mashiach the son of Joseph. He too will be trapped in this evil snare, and what happened to them will also happen to him.

A TRUE STORY

Seeking Forgiveness

It is written, "I have done nothing" (Genesis 40:15).

One day some prominent figures from Yass asked the Rebbe of Rozhin, Rabbi Israel, to come to their town in order to make peace between rivals and settle disputes within the community. The Rebbe of Rozhin agreed and set out for Yass. When the residents heard that he was arriving, everyone went out to meet him and there was great excitement in the air. The leaders of the community, who were concerned about the large crowds, asked the police to send a few officers to supervise the event and ensure public safety. These officers, however, were overly enthusiastic about their task. In fact when one of them saw a Jew trying to cut into line, he struck him with his baton. The Rebbe felt tremendous regret upon seeing this, for his heart ached over the harm caused to a Jew because of him.

A few years later, when Rabbi Israel was serving a long prison term, one of his chassidim came to visit him. He was very wealthy and had managed to bribe the prison guards. Overjoyed to see him, the Rebbe said: "For a long time I've asked myself why Heaven has punished me with imprisonment. However I remember that when I was in Yass, a police officer struck a Jew. Take the key that I'm giving you and give it to my family. Tell them to open the safe that is in my home, and to take out a small bag with gold coins that I brought from Yass. Two Jews should be chosen to travel to Yass, and there they should look for the Jew who was beaten. They should then ask him for forgiveness and give him the gold coins." After 15 days of searching, the Jew's widow was found, and she said that her husband had died several years earlier. She was greatly surprised by their visit, for she said that they had nothing to worry about because her husband's injury had quickly healed. The chassidim implored her to take the money, and they chose 10 men to travel to the grave of her husband and implore his forgiveness for the suffering he had endured. Soon afterwards, the Rebbe of Rozhin was released from prison.