



# The Path To Follow

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## GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

### Even Paying a Little Attention is Important

Even if paying attention to what we say is only somewhat useful at first (serving primarily to diminish our sins so we become slightly less used to them), the effort is still worth it, for by not speaking just ten forbidden words a day, we will have avoided 3,000 forbidden words in a year. Just as each word constitutes an individual mitzvah in regards to the study of Torah, likewise each forbidden word constitutes an individual sin, and each sin creates a separate accuser. When we control what we say and avoid speaking 3,000 forbidden words a year, we thereby prevent the creation of 3,000 accusers. In fact we create defenders in their place, as it is written: "If a person remains seated without committing a sin, he is given a reward as if he had performed a mitzvah."

- Chovat HaShemirah

## PEACE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE – THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

It is written, "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). The Sages have noted that it is not written "within it [the Sanctuary]," but "among them," which teaches us that the Shechinah dwells in each of them. Given that the Shechinah did not dwell solely within the Sanctuary, but in each of the Children of Israel, we may ask why the Sanctuary was needed! We also need to understand how it could be that, although we learn some very important mitzvot from the crowns upon the Hebrew letters, mitzvot that apply to all the generations, the Sanctuary itself was eventually destroyed and no longer stood in the generations that followed, and yet the Torah still spread abundantly over everything that concerned it.

At the beginning of Parsha Vayakhel, the Ramban states: "Moses, after having commanded Aaron and the rulers and all the Children of Israel – the men – all that the L-RD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai, following the breaking of the Tablets and after he had put the veil on his face, again commanded that the people be assembled, whereupon the whole congregation gathered to him – men, women and children. It is possible that this occurred on the day following his descent from the mountain, and he told all of them the subject of the Sanctuary, which he had previously commanded, before the breaking of the Tablets. For since the Holy One, blessed be He, became reconciled with them and gave Moses the second Tablets, and also made a new covenant that G-d would go in their midst, He thereby returned to His previous relationship with them and to the love of their nuptials, and it was obvious that the Shechinah would be in their midst, just as He had commanded him at first" (Ramban on Exodus 35:1).

Furthermore, Sforno (on Leviticus 11:2) states that once the Children of Israel had lost the spiritual crown acquired at the giving of the Torah, the moment when they merited the Shechinah dwelling upon them without an intermediary, Hashem did not want His Shechinah to dwell upon them right away, as it is written: "I shall not ascend among you" (Exodus 33:3). Through his prayer, Moses was able to have the Shechinah dwell among them through the intermediary of the Sanctuary, its vessels, its priests, and its offerings. How can these two things be reconciled? We still do not know whether the Shechinah returned to dwell among the Children of Israel, or whether it simply dwelled in the Sanctuary! The Midrash (Pesikta Rabbati 6) notes that in the description of the work carried out by King Solomon, Scripture does state that "the work" was completed, but that "all the work" (I Kings 7:51) was completed, a reference to the six days of Creation. Thus we read, "All the work that G-d created to make" (Genesis 2:3) – it does not state "had made," but "to make," meaning that more work still exists. When King Solomon came and built the Temple, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: "The work of Heaven and earth is now done; all the work is shalem [complete]." That is why he was called Solomon, for Hashem hishlim (completed) the work of Creation through the work of his hands.

According to the Sages (Sotah 17a), if husband and wife are worthy, the Shechinah dwells among them; otherwise a fire devours them. Even when the Temple is no longer present, if husband and wife are worthy, peace reigns between them and the Holy One, blessed be He, comes and makes His Shechinah dwell among them. Hence the Torah speaks at great length about the smallest details of the Sanctuary. This teaches us that there is a Sanctuary that is not destroyed, one that exists forever, namely the home of every Jew – where the Shechinah rests when peace reigns between husband and wife. What is written concerning the peace that exists between husband and wife? The Sages say, "The world was only made to be populated, as it says: 'He did not create it for emptiness. He fashioned it to be inhabited' [Isaiah 45:18]" (Gittin 41b). This teaches us that when peace exists between husband and wife, the world endures, as well as the word "that G-d created to make." The goal of Creation then becomes complete. Yet when there is no peace between husband and wife, the world cannot endure, and since there is no peace among them, Creation immediately returns to a state of chaos.

Thus the Sages have said, "If a man divorces his first wife, even

the altar sheds tears" (Gittin 90b). The reason is because a man's house should resemble the Sanctuary. Just as daily offerings, the olah (elevation offering) and mussaf (additional offering) were brought in the Sanctuary, likewise a man who marries a woman merits to mossif (add) and oleh (elevate) himself in the service of G-d, which he cannot do without a wife, as it is written: "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness...without peace" (Yebamot 62b).

When a man divorces his wife, Scripture considers him to have destroyed the Temple, for just as the altar without the Temple is nothing – not being worthy of receiving offerings – one who divorces his wife amid strife destroys the Temple. Therefore the elevation and additional offerings that are brought in his home will cease. Since the Temple is destroyed, even the altar sheds tears over it, for the main thing is the Temple. When the Temple stands, there is an altar. However without the Temple, even if there is an altar, it serves no purpose.

Therefore let us say that the Shechinah came and dwelled upon the Children of Israel. Exactly where did it dwell? In the house of each of them when peace reigned within. Even in our time, when the Temple no longer stands, the Shechinah still dwells in the Temple, for the house of a Jew is called a Temple. This is the sense of the verse, "How goodly are your tents O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel" (Numbers 24:5). This was said regarding the peace that reigned between husband and wife, as the Sages have stated: "He saw that the doors of their tents did not exactly face one another, whereupon he exclaimed: 'Worthy are they that the Shechinah should dwell upon them!' " (Bava Batra 60a). We may therefore say that as long as the Temple does not stand – meaning as long as there is no peace in the homes of Israel – the work of Creation has not yet reached a state of perfection, and Heaven and earth have not been strengthened. When the Temple stands and there is peace between husband and wife, the Creation of Heaven and earth immediately reaches a state of perfection and they are strengthened. The world only endures by the merit of peace between husband and wife. Since it is written, "If not for My covenant, I would not have appointed days and nights, the decrees of heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 33:25) – on which our Sages have said: "If it were not for the Torah, Heaven and earth would not endure" (Pesachim 68b) – then perhaps one could say that the world also endures by the study of Torah? The answer is that the Torah itself only endures when there is peace. As long as there is peace, there is Torah. When there is no peace, there is no Torah. The proof is that the Torah was only given to the Children of Israel when peace reigned among them, as the Sages have said on the verse, "Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain" (Exodus 19:2): "All the other encampments were with resentment and dissension, but here everyone was of the same heart, hence it is written: 'Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain.'" We also read, "The L-RD will give strength to His people. The L-RD will bless His people with peace" (Psalms 29:11). Thus when the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah to Israel, there was instant peace.

This is why we find, with regards to the Temple, that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them." He said, "Let them make," which corresponds to "that G-d created to make" (Genesis 2:3). This indicates that the goal of Creation is not completely attained before there is a Sanctuary and the Children of Israel offer sacrifices when peace reigns among them. Hence it is written, "Let them make for Me" – they must do everything together in peace. The term li ("for Me") has a numerical value of 40, corresponding to the Torah that was given after 40 days. This teaches us that when Jews study Torah and fulfill mitzvot, and when there is peace between them, the Holy One, blessed be He, makes His Shechinah dwell among them, for it is written: "I will dwell among them," not "I will dwell in it." This means that through peace, the Shechinah comes and dwells in everyone.

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## They Shall Make an Ark

A talmid chacham, who is responsible for learning Torah, always needs a partner so as not to neglect his studies by trying to earn a living through commerce or business, just as Issachar and Zebulun were partners. Thus Zebulun was engaged in commerce, and he gave Issachar what he needed in order to study Torah all day long without having to worry about the needs of his home or a livelihood. Without such a partner, a talmid chacham would have to close his book and look for work. Thus it is written, “They shall make an Ark” (Exodus 25:10). In order for man to merit the Torah, it is impossible for him to be alone, for there a tremendous need to be two: One must be involved in business, and the other must study Torah. They each have the same reward, as it is written: “To sit in the shelter of wisdom is to sit in the shelter of money” (Ecclesiastes 7:12). This means that whoever enables a talmid chacham to benefit from his possessions so he can study Torah without interruption, such a person – even if uneducated – will be worthy of sitting in the celestial yeshiva alongside the talmid chacham. It is a majestic place, a reward that Scripture describes by saying: “No eye has ever seen, O G-d, besides You, Who has acted for those who trust in Him” (Isaiah 64:3). In other words, the place that Hashem has reserved for the talmidei chachamim is so great that no eye can behold it, not even the eyes of angels. The reason why an uneducated person can merit this greatness is because he shared his possessions with a talmid chacham so he could study Torah. Therefore half his Torah is his. That being said, it follows that he is just as important as a talmid chacham. In discussing this issue with Rabbi Yochanan (see Ketubot 111b), Rabbi Eleazar said: “The uneducated will not be resurrected,” and he presented a proof from Scripture to bolster his point. Rabbi Yochanan replied, “It brings no satisfaction to their Master that you should speak of them in this way.” Rabbi Eleazar brought proof from another text, stating that the dead will be resurrected by the light of the Torah, and one who does not use this light will not be resurrected. Realizing that this upset Rabbi Yochanan, Rabbi Eleazar finally said: “I have found a solution for them in the Chumash, for it is written: ‘You who cleave to the L-RD your G-d are all alive today’ [Deuteronomy 4:4].” In other words, whoever lets a talmid chacham partake of his possessions, it is as if he had cleaved to the Shechinah. Hence it is said that they “are all alive today,” and by this merit they will be resurrected.

– Yalkut Me’am Loez

A Pearl From the Rav:

The Temple and its Vessels Correspond to Israel

It is written, “See that you make them after their pattern, which was shown to you on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40).

Rashi explains, “See here on the mountain the pattern that I am showing you. [This] informs us that Moses had difficulties with the construction of the Menorah, until the Holy One, blessed is He, showed him a Menorah of fire.” This is astonishing, for any goldsmith knows how to make a candelabrum, to design shapes and engrave bowls and flowers on it! What was so difficult for Moses?

The answer is that Moses knew that the Sanctuary and its vessels corresponded to Israel. He also knew that the Menorah alludes to the body of the people of Israel, as our Sages have said: “ ‘There is a Menorah of gold’ [Zachariah 4:2] – this is the community of Israel, of which it is said: ‘You are entirely fair’ [Song of Songs 4:7]” (Pesikta Rabbati 8:4). Moses was therefore surprised, saying to himself: It is said that it must be made from a single block, which teaches us that all the Children of Israel should be united, as this Menorah which is made from a single block and cannot be used if the slightest detail is lacking. How is it possible for all the Children of Israel to be united? The Holy One, blessed be He,

commanded Moses to tell the Children of Israel: “Make an opening for Me, and I shall come and help you.” He showed him a Menorah of fire in order to tell him that whoever wants to purify himself is given help from Heaven. Therefore if the Children of Israel begin to unite, Hashem will immediately help them, as we find in the case of the Menorah: “The flame should ascend of its own accord” (Shabbat 20a). This means that the Holy One, blessed be He, helps the Children of Israel to be united as soon as they take it upon themselves to do so.

Giving Wholeheartedly

It is written, “From every man whose heart motivates him, you shall take My offering” (Exodus 25:2).

It is written, “Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold” (Haggai 2:8). In fact what a person offers is not really his, since silver and gold belong to Hashem. Therefore what can a person offer that is truly his? It is his willingness, his wholehearted desire to give. That is why one who gives through a sense of obligation, meaning without his heart being in accord with his hand, is not really giving anything at all. In fact money – silver and gold – are not his, as we have said, and furthermore he lacks the will to give. Hence the verse states, “From every man whose heart motivates him” – only from one who gives wholeheartedly; “shall you take My offering” – from him shall you take something, namely his generosity. Yet from those who are tentative in giving, nothing shall be taken.

– Torat Moshe

An Amazing Allusion

It is written, “Gold, silver, and copper” (Exodus 25:3).

The Sages have said that there is nothing which the Torah does not allude to. Here the Chatam Sofer discovered an amazing allusion to special days in the Jewish calendar.

Zahav (“gold”) – zayin hei beit. The numerical value of zayin is seven, representing the seventh day of the week, Shabbat; the numerical value of hei is five, representing the fifth day of the week; the numerical value of beit is two, representing the second day of the week, the Torah being read on the second, fifth, and seventh days of the week.

Kessef (“silver”) – caph samech peh. Caph represents Yom Kippur; samech represents Sukkot; and peh represents Purim.

Nechoshet (“copper”) – nun chet shin tav. Nun represents the Nerot (the Chanukah lights); chet represents Rosh Chodesh (the first of every month, including Rosh Hashanah, the first of Tishri); shin represents Shavuot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simcha Torah; and tav represents the ta’anith (fast days).

A Sanctuary Within the Heart

It is written, “Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

Why does the verse say, “So that I may dwell among them,” rather than “So that I may dwell in it” – in the Sanctuary? The answer is that “among them” refers to the Children of Israel. Each Jew must prepare a place in his heart for the Shechinah to dwell. In that case Hashem will dwell “among them” – in the heart of them all. Hence it is written, “So shall you do” (Exodus 25:9), which Rashi explains to mean: “In future generations.” Since the Sanctuary is within the heart, this means that we must build it at all times and in every generation.

– The Malbim

Heartfelt Yearning

It is written, “So shall you do” (Exodus 25:9).

Rashi explains this to mean, “In future generations.” This teaches us that the Children of Israel wholeheartedly yearned to build a place where the Shechinah could dwell, and they merited it. If they had not merited it, it would have meant that it is not enough to yearn for something. Hence the Sages have said, “Every generation in which the Temple is not rebuilt

is regarded as the generation in which it was destroyed” (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1). In fact if a real yearning for the Temple had existed, that yearning would have been fulfilled.

– Sefat Emet

A Solid Foundation

It is written, “You shall make the planks of the Sanctuary of acacia wood, upright” (Exodus 26:15).

Rashi explains why the verse uses the definite article (“the planks”). Were special planks used in the construction of the Sanctuary, planks that were known and prepared beforehand? Yes! Through Divine inspiration, Jacob saw that the Children of Israel would build a Sanctuary in the desert, and therefore he planted cedars in Egypt for this very purpose. As he was dying, he commanded his children to carry these planks with them upon leaving Egypt. He said to them, “The Holy One, blessed be He, will command you to make a Sanctuary in the desert using acacia wood. See that they should be ready.” From where did Jacob take the seeds for these amazing cedars? The Midrash states: “ ‘Israel set out with all he had, and he came to Beersheba’ [Genesis 46:1]. Where had he gone? Rabbi Nachman said, ‘He went to cut down the cedars which his grandfather Abraham had planted in Beersheba’ ” (Bereshith Rabba 94:4). Hence we have our answer: The planks used in building the Sanctuary had sanctified origins, for they were not ordinary planks. To construct the Sanctuary, special planks were needed. Safeguarded by Jacob, these planks had their origins in the trees that Abraham planted in Beersheba.

Exactly which trees did Abraham plant in Beersheba, and why did he plant them there? The answer is given in Parsha Vayeira: “He planted an eshel in Beersheba” (Genesis 21:33). Now the term eshel is formed from the first letters of the words achila (food), shetiya (drink), and lina (a place to sleep). Beneath the trees that Abraham planted, his guests received food and drink from him, and they also rested their exhausted bodies by sleeping there. These trees were infused with kindness in such a complete way that they could serve as a foundation for the construction of the Sanctuary. That being the origin of these planks, it is not surprising that they would remain standing forever. As the Sages have said, “Acacia wood, upright.... [You may say that] their hope is gone, their expectation is frustrated. Therefore the text says upright – standing for all time” (Yoma 72a). Hence in the construction of the Sanctuary, Hashem commanded that its planks come from the trees planted by Jacob, not from other trees, for it was precisely such wood that befit the miracle of standing for all time.

– HaDrash VeHalayun

Overview of the Parsha

After the Jewish people are formed by the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah and its laws, they receive the order in Parsha Terumah to prepare a Sanctuary for Hashem in the midst of Israel. This Sanctuary would be represented first and foremost by the Tablets of the Covenant, which symbolized Hashem’s Torah. The Sanctuary is like a royal palace, the king’s abode, but without a concrete representation of the king himself.

Hashem asks for an offering to be taken from the Children of Israel in order to make the Sanctuary and its implements. These consist of the Ark, the Ark Cover and Cherubim, the Shulchan for the daily bread, the Menorah with its lights to illuminate the Shulchan, the hangings to cover the Sanctuary from above, and the curtains and partition to separate different levels of sanctity within the tent. Offerings are to be brought outside the tent, where an altar is to be built. A fence is to be erected around the tent and the altar.

## REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

In My Honor

It is written, “You shall cover it with copper” (Exodus 27:2).

Moses said to Hashem: “You have told me that the fire of the altar must burn all day and night, as it is written: ‘The fire upon the altar shall be kept burning on it. It must not go out’ [Leviticus 6:5]. How can the cover that is over the altar resist its flames, since it is no thicker than a coin? It will certainly melt and the wood beneath it will burn.”

The Holy One, blessed be He, answered Moses: “Do not look upon this as a problem. There is nothing difficult for Me, so why are you surprised that the cover over the altar will remain intact, since it was made in My honor? The dead things that come before Me become alive. Thus when Aaron’s rod, which was a dried piece of wood, was placed before Me, it is written: ‘On the next day Moses went into the Tent of Meeting, and behold: The rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had budded and brought forth buds that bloomed and yielded almonds’ [Numbers 17:23]. Concerning the cedars that Hiram the king of Tyre sent to King Solomon in order to build the Temple, all the branches began to bud, and the cedars used in its construction bore fruit, as it is written: ‘Planted in the house of the L-RD, in the courtyards of our G-d they will flourish’ [Psalms 92:14]. They constantly yielded fruit, and the young priests drew their sustenance from it. There was also the miracle of the poles that you made to carry the Ark, poles that were made of dried wood. They nevertheless lasted for many years, until Solomon built the Temple. Given that all these things were dead, and yet lived when they came before Me, do not be afraid that the wood of the altar will burn, for it was made in My honor. Who commands fire to burn? Is it not I? And did you not notice, when you ascended to Heaven, that you were walking between walls of fire, as it is written: ‘For the L-RD your G-d is a consuming fire, a jealous G-d’ [Deuteronomy 4:24]? You should have been burned, but you were not because you ascended at My command. Therefore do not be afraid that the altar will burn, even if the fire stays burning on it day and night, for it is being done in My honor.

– Yalkut Me’am Loez

## ESHET HAYIL

Tzedakah Without Limit

Two poor men came to the home of the Chacham Tzvi asking for tzedakah. The generosity of his household was famous, although they had almost nothing left to give at the time because they had donated almost all they had. Not knowing what to do, the Chacham Tzvi’s daughter hesitated for a moment. Suddenly she remembered that there was still a small silver spoon that she could give to them. Yet how was she going to give one spoon to two people? She decided to break the spoon in half and give the handle to one of them and the spoon part to the other. They left happy and content.

When the Chacham Tzvi saw what his daughter had done, he said to her with a smile: “You are an Eishet Chayil, for you have fulfilled the verse: ‘She spreads out her palm [kapa, which also means spoon] to the poor, and she extends her hand [yad, which also means handle] to the needy.’ ”

– Hi Tithalal



## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Yehonatan Abelman – The Author of Zichron Yehonatan

The gaon Rabbi Yehonatan Abelman Zatzal was the Rav of Bialystok and the author of Zichron Yehonatan and Torat Yehonatan.

Upon reaching the age of marriage, the young Rabbi Yehonatan was offered a match with the daughter of a very wealthy man. He was inclined to accept in order to study Torah in peace and tranquility, without having to worry about a livelihood. However Rebbetzin Esther, the wife of Rabbi Israel Salanter, wanted to speak with him and examine the match a little more closely. Rabbi Yehonatan told her that the match was with the daughter of a wealthy man who was offering a dowry of 5,000 rubles in cash, and who was prepared to provide for all the couple's needs for the next ten years. Rabbi Yehonatan was inclined to accept, for in this way he could perfect himself in Torah as he desired. Rebbetzin Esther told him that while he certainly had good intentions, he was making a mistake because of his minimal understanding of the nature of money and its value in the outside world. Normally a person does not leave his money to others for nothing, meaning without some obligations being tied to it. Yet here was a man who would leave him 5,000 rubles, and not only that, but he was ready to provide for the needs of him and his household for ten entire years, and with no conditions whatsoever being attached? She said to him, "You should realize that this is impossible, since you will pay a heavy interest for the rest of your life. If this man wants to give you 5,000 rubles to marry one of his daughters, it means that his entire fortune must be fifty to sixty thousand rubles. The daughter of such a man is used to living with all kinds of superfluous luxuries that will cost more than a hundred thousand rubles, and she will demand one thing after another from her husband for the rest of her life. That is the yoke of materiality; it is the cruel interest that you will have to bear. You will not be able to move your neck for your entire life, and there can be no greater chaos and negligence of Torah than this." These words deeply affected the author of Zichron Yehonatan, and he lost an interest for wealth and aspired to live in the shelter of wisdom of truth.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### This House That You Are Building

*It is written, "G-d gave Solomon wisdom" (I Kings 5:9).*

Further on we read, "The word of the L-RD came to Solomon, saying: 'This house that you are building, if you follow My decrees, perform My statutes, and observe all My commandments, to follow them, I shall uphold My word with you' " (ibid. 6:11-12).

Why the expression, "that you are building"? Was the Temple still being built at that point? It was already finished!

The answer to this apparent discrepancy is that the Temple was not finished, nor will it ever be finished! This is because the Temple does not consist solely of physical materials. Rather it is a step in the paths of Hashem, an approach to following His laws, His decrees, and His Torah. These are the "materials" that bring this building into existence. Such an approach constitutes the very building process itself. It is what constitutes the existence of the Temple. It is, and it will always be, one "that you are building."

Conversely, the structure of yesterday is but the basis for the structure of today. If you stop building, even the structure of yesterday will collapse and crumble. Its very existence depends on what happens after it is built, as we read in the verse: "To the wise, the way of life leads upward, that he may depart from Sheol below" (Proverbs 15:24). This means that if we do not progress upwards, we will necessarily descend to the depths. Our refuge against the depths is none other than the heights, which is what "you are building." The existence of yesterday has nothing to do with the existence of today, and the existence of today has nothing to do with the existence of tomorrow. Each moment has its own set of conditions for existence.

Therein lies the path of personal growth, the spiritual construction of man.

– Birkat Mordechai

## A TRUE STORY

### Clearing a Path

*It is written, "You shall make a gold crown on it all around" (Exodus 25:11).*

Rashi states, "This was to symbolize the crown of the Torah."

It was a bitterly-cold winter night, a cold that cut to the bone, and a thick layer of snow had blanketed the entire town. Just before dawn, when the temperature was at its coldest, those who got up early in Horodna went out into the frozen and snow-filled streets. They were heading towards the Beit Midrash, where morning classes took place every day.

On their way to the Beit Midrash, they were astonished to see a man who was standing in the thick snow and appeared to be dancing! From afar he seemed to be covered with thick clothes, but was nevertheless trembling and his teeth were chattering. When they got closer, they could hear him saying: "For the mitzvah! For the mitzvah!"

"Who is this man?" these early risers asked themselves. "What's happened to him, and what is he doing trembling in the snow? Let's take a closer look." Some of them were courageous enough to approach the man, and they were stunned to see that this dancer was none other than Rabbi Nachum of Horodna. They were worried at that point, for what could have happened to the Rabbi?

However Rabbi Nachum lowered his eyes, like someone who had been caught doing something wrong. With a voice tinged with shame, he said to these astonished people: "The morning will soon arrive, and children and their teachers will be coming down this road. I thought that if someone was trying to make it through the thick layer of snow, he might catch a cold. I therefore decided to remove the snow from the road and clear a path for them." – Ma'asehem Shel Tzaddikim

## THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

### Half the Field for Tzeddakah

Three very great Sages, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva, often traveled to Antioch in order to collect funds for the poor.

Living in that town was a wealthy man by the name of Abba Yudan. He usually gave generously to the poor, however tragedy struck him at one point and he lost all his wealth. In fact he was forced to sell almost everything he had in order to buy food for his family. One day the three Sages again arrived in his town, and when Abba Yudan saw them he became as red as saffron. He was embarrassed that he had no money to give to tzeddakah. He therefore returned home sad and depressed.

His wife asked him, "What happened? Are you sick?" He replied, "My rabbis are here, but I don't have a cent to give them!"

His wife also grew red with shame, for she too regretted not being able to perform this important mitzvah. Reflecting a little, she said: "We still have a field. Go sell half of it and give the proceeds to the Sages." Abba Yudan replied, "An excellent idea!" He then went out and sold half of his field, giving the proceeds to the three Sages. Since they were aware that he had become impoverished, they gave him the blessing: "May the Omnipresent replenish your loss!"

Abba Yudan still had half his field, and one day he went out to work it. As he was plowing with his cow, it fell into a pit that opened up before it, breaking its leg.

Abba Yudan was heartbroken, for his only remaining cow could no longer help him work his field. What was he going to do? He went down into the pit to retrieve his cow, when suddenly he saw something: A treasure had been placed at the bottom of the pit, and it contained a tremendous amount of gold!

Abba Yudan was overjoyed! "This is from Hashem," he said. "It was for my benefit that my cow broke its leg!" The three Sages eventually returned to Antioch and inquired after Abba Yudan. They were told that he now had servants and maidservants, houses and fields, camels, goats, and oxen. When Abba Yudan heard that the Sages had arrived, he went out to meet them with great joy. When they asked him how he was, he replied: "Your prayer has made me very wealthy!" They said, "When we saw your commitment to the mitzvah of tzeddakah, we placed you at the top of our list, asking Hashem to quickly help you."

The Sages took Abba Yudan and seated him among themselves, according him great honor. They thanked Hashem for all the good He had lavished upon Abba Yudan for having fulfilled the mitzvah of tzeddakah. – Ma'asehem Shel Tzaddikim on Vayikra Rabba 5:4