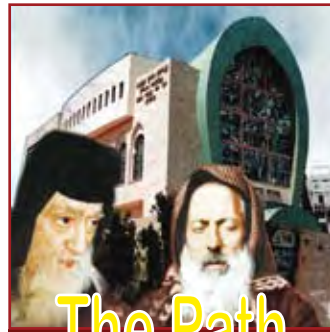


STUDYING TORAH ON SHABBAT ATONES FOR THE SIN OF THE GOLDEN CALF (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)



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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

GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

The Study of Torah

The Torah states, "You shall teach them thoroughly to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

This verse teaches us that we must study Torah at all times. A person who does not use his time to study Torah transgresses this mitzvah, a sin that is termed bitul Torah (a negligence in Torah study). The reward for the mitzvah of Torah study is very great, to the point that it equals all the other mitzvot. Each word involved in Torah study is considered a single mitzvah in and of itself. Alternatively, the punishment for a negligence in Torah study equals all the other sins. When the time comes for a man to be judged before the Heavenly court, he will be asked if he studied Torah. People may often be considered innocent because they were busy earning a living and doing practical things. However this does not apply when a person speaks Lashon Harah, for in that case he will have nothing to say when asked why he spoke Lashon Harah instead of learning Torah. Hence we fully understand why, with each word of Lashon Harah that a person speaks, he becomes guilty of a negligence in Torah study.

It is written, "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day. Moses spoke to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel, saying: '... Take from yourselves an offering for the L-RD'" (Exodus 35:3-5). The Sages have asked why a warning is given concerning the observance of Shabbat before the order is given to build the Sanctuary. They explain that this teaches us the 39 forbidden kinds of work on Shabbat, and the fact that building the Sanctuary does not take precedence over Shabbat (Shabbat 97b; Mechilta; Rashi on Exodus 35:2). We still have to understand why the mitzvah of Shabbat is mentioned between the description of the sin of the golden calf and the construction of the Sanctuary. Even if Moses wanted to teach us that the construction of the Sanctuary does not take precedence over Shabbat, he could have mentioned it elsewhere, or it could have been a Halachah transmitted to him on Sinai. It is not without reason that the Children of Israel received the order to build the Sanctuary immediately after the incident of the golden calf. Deep allusions are hidden in this. As we know, when the Children of Israel committed the sin of the golden calf, the Shechinah stopped dwelling among them. Then when Hashem forgave them, they needed to build the Sanctuary, a place of holiness, in order for the Shechinah to return among them (see Shabbat 87b). It is written, "Let them make a Sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8) – "among them," not "in it," meaning among each of the Children of Israel. Now we know that the Sanctuary and its vessels, the Ark of the Covenant, the Shulchan, the Holy of Holies, the Altar and the Tent of Meeting, allude to the human body. The Holy of Holies represents the heart, the vessels represent the limbs and sinews, and the Ark represents the brain, where the Torah and good thoughts reside. The fragments of the first Tablets represent bad middot, which a person can break by working on himself, whereas the second Tablets represent good middot. The Shulchan and the Showbread allude to the fact that a person must be like a set table, filled with Torah that is likened to hot bread – the heat of the Torah. The Altar alludes to the fact that a person must be as humble as the earth, ready to sacrifice himself for the Torah, as in the verse: "When a man among you sacrifices" (Leviticus 1:2). The Menorah and oil represent the body and soul, which together must be attached to the service of Hashem, to the point that the flame ascends on its own. Like the High Priest who ascends the steps to light the Menorah, a person must constantly be ascending. The Altar of incense embodies the concept of, "Let my prayer be set forth before You like incense" (Psalms 141:2), a reference to serving G-d with devotion. The High Priest who performs the service in the Sanctuary alludes to the fact that a person must resemble a High Priest, for just as he serves in the Sanctuary in order for the world to endure, likewise a person must feel that the world was created for him alone (Sanhedrin 37a). Since the world belongs to him, he must have an influence on it through his prayers, and by his service of Hashem in holiness and purity.

That being said, our dilemma gets worse, for why did Moses not begin with the essential issue first, namely the construction of the Sanctuary so the Shechinah could rest upon it? He could have then spoken about the observance of Shabbat. Since the Torah chose to begin with the subject of Shabbat before mentioning the construction of the Sanctuary, there must certainly be good reasons for it, ones that we need to understand. We may explain by saying that a person only becomes a miniature sanctuary that

evokes the Sanctuary and its vessels when he humbles himself before the Torah. He must humble himself to the point that the Torah's opinion supersedes his own instincts and desires. To reach that point, he must work hard on himself and fight the evil inclination, which constantly tries to make him sin and ultimately to defeat him. The way the evil inclination works is that each day it renews its strength and approaches a person, enticing him to sin to such an extent that he is chased from the world. In order for a person to emerge victorious in this battle, he must first be careful that his mind is free from all worries.

During the week, a person is completely occupied by his business and daily concerns. Even if he prays three times a day and sets aside time for studying Torah, his mind is still not free from all his problems, and it is difficult for him to defeat the evil inclination when his mind is occupied. He is like a man who is encumbered by metal chains that prevent him from fighting his opponent, an especially daunting task if his opponent is strong. He can also be compared to someone who cannot see without glasses, or even to someone whose hands are filled with all kinds of things. In these cases, something is disturbing the person in question and preventing him from defeating a powerful enemy. Even if he possesses an effective weapon, he is encumbered to such a point that he cannot concentrate on the battle at hand.

Hence during the week, it is very difficult for a person to free himself from his concerns in order to concentrate on fighting the evil inclination. It is only on Shabbat, when it is forbidden to work, or even to think about work or make plans, that the mind is free to pursue spiritual objectives. Commenting on the verse, "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:3), the Baal HaTurim wrote: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: "My fire [i.e., Gehinnom] stops for you on Shabbat; your fire must also stop." This means that even if a person is great in Torah, due to his mundane occupations during the week, his head is not free to occupy itself with holiness despite his desire to do so, especially since the sanctity of the week cannot be compared to that of Shabbat. As for Shabbat, a holy day when the mind is free from all problems and worries of the week, if a person sits down to study Torah, he receives new strength that he can use to fight the evil inclination. It is only by the study of Torah on Shabbat, done with a tranquil mind that is free of the worries of this world, that a person can confront the temptations of the evil inclination and overcome his instincts and material desires. Yet as we know, the Sages have said: "He who made an effort on the eve of Shabbat will eat on Sabbath" (Avodah Zarah 3a). A great deal of preparation during the entire week is needed so that on Shabbat we can effectively receive this extra strength. Then, even after Shabbat, a person will have strength remaining for the coming week. In fact the Sages have said that all the days of the week are blessed through Shabbat (Zohar I:75b; II:63b), and therefore a person can free his mind from his concerns and the vanities of this world.

It is only when a person prepares himself and puts an effort as early as the eve of Shabbat that he can satisfy himself with Torah on Shabbat, to the point that Shabbat truly becomes part of his persona and he can become a miniature Sanctuary. This not only means that he has an additional soul on Shabbat, but that the Shechinah actually rests on him, as the verse says: "That I may dwell among them."

MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

The Mishkan is a Mashkon

It is written, "These are the accounts of the Mishkan [Sanctuary], the Mishkan [Sanctuary] of Testimony" (Exodus 38:21).

Rashi states, "Mishkan is written twice. This is an allusion to the Temple, which was taken as a mashkon [pledge] by being destroyed twice for Israel's sins."

In his book *Be'er Moshe*, Rabbi Moshe Yechiel Epstein Zatzal (the Ozharover Rebbe) explains the concept of the Temple's destruction in terms of a pledge. Studying the laws of pledges, says the *Be'er Moshe*, teaches us how to deal with its destruction, and what we can do to bring about its rebuilding.

In fact the laws of pledges state, "The creditor acquires a title to the pledge" (Bava Metzia 82a). This means that the lender, the person to whom the borrower is indebted, is permitted to sell the pledge as a means of collecting the debt owed to him if the borrower cannot repay him. However another law states that if the borrower is poor and has no garment or covering other than the one held in pledge, the lender must return that pledge to him each day or night, depending on the type of garment, so he can use it for his needs. This is because it "is his only covering; it is the garment for his skin. Where shall he sleep?" (Exodus 22:26).

What characterizes the taking of a pledge, and the difference between a pledge and a final settlement of a debt, is the fact that as long as the collection of the debt is not absolute and the pledge is still regarded as a security, it remains necessary for the lender to consider whether the borrower is poor and in need of his pledge. In that case, the lender must provide him with the use of the pledge, even though the borrower still owes it to him because he cannot pay his debt.

What is the reason behind this? Does the pledge not rightfully belong to the lender? Why must he take the borrower's anguish into consideration? The answer is given in the Torah: "It shall be that if he cries out to Me, I will hearken, for I am compassionate" (Exodus 22:26). The Tosaphot explain on Rosh Hashanah 17b: "Even if, in terms of strict justice, the pledge belongs to you because you loaned him money, you must still give it back to him, for I will hear his cry. I am compassionate, and I cannot bear to see him in distress."

The Torah teaches us that when a poor person cries out in his misery, the rule of strict justice cannot be applied. True, you are permitted by law to demand a pledge for security, but you still cannot ignore his plight. The Holy One, blessed be He, is compassionate, for it is one of His thirteen middot. This particular middah means: "I cannot bear to see him in distress." Hashem's compassion prevents Him, so to speak, from seeing the distress of the poor crying out in anguish. Hence "If he cries out to Me, I will hearken, for I am compassionate."

The *Be'er Moshe* therefore concludes that since the Sages referred to the Temple as a mashkon, it means that its destruction was not clear and final. True, it was destroyed, but if we perceive its absence in the same way as a poor person who lacks a garment to cover himself – if we cry out and beseech Hashem like a poor person pleading for his life – then He will surely give it back to us. In fact Hashem's compassion requires Him to give it back to us!

A Pearl From the Rav: Observing the Torah in Humility

If a person desires to grow in the wisdom of the Torah, he must go to the Beit Midrash, as the Sages have said: "Exile yourself to a place of Torah" (Pirkei Avot 4:14; Shabbat 147b). The main thing, however, is not to be content on just going there. A person must study Torah there with humility, by humbling himself (Taanith 7a), in which case the Torah that he learns will endure. In fact we see many people who go to the Beit Midrash, and yet they do not become wiser. This is because they are not truly studying.

We find this idea alluded to in the verse, "These are the accounts of the Mishkan [Sanctuary], Mishkan HaEdut [the Sanctuary of Testimony]" (Exodus 38:21). In other words, it is not enough just to go to the Sanctuary,

to the Beit Midrash; we also need Mishkan HaEdut, the residence of the Testimony. We must go to the Beit Midrash and study the Torah that is called the Testimony, for it was placed in the Ark of the Testimony, as it is written: "You will put what I give you into the Ark the Testimony" (Exodus 25:16). We also need to study the Torah with humility and a contrite heart, just as the fragments of the first Tablets were also placed in the Ark (Berachot 8b; Bava Batra 14b). In that case the Torah we learn will endure. Similarly, the verse contains an allusion to the concept of a reckoning, i.e., of going to the tzaddikim and asking them for advice on how to serve Hashem. Similarly, when someone is sick, we go to a sage and ask him to beseech Hashem for mercy (Bava Batra 116a). This applies for problems in both the spiritual and material realm. Thus it is written, "These are the pekudei [accounts] of the Sanctuary" – these are the tzaddikim that we must lifkod (visit). Why? "The Sanctuary of Testimony" – they, the tzaddikim, are considered a sanctuary of testimony, like the Urim and Tumim, whose every word was clear. They are like the Ark of the Testimony, the Ark that carried those who carried it (Sotah 35a; Bamidbar Rabba 4:20; Zohar II:242a). Therefore one who visits a tzaddik, it is as if he had welcomed the Shechinah (Tanhuma, Tisa 27). He also resembles one who directed a question to the Urim and Tumim, or one who ascended to the Temple. There is another allusion in the repetition of the word Mishkan, as the Sages have said (Tanhuma, Pekudei 2), an allusion to the two Temples that were taken as a pledge because of the sins of the Children of Israel. Likewise the tzaddikim are like a pledge for the sins of the Jewish people. When Jews sin, the tzaddikim, who are testimony for Israel, are taken as a pledge and leave this world because of our many sins. As the Sages have said, "The death of the tzaddikim is like the burning of the Temple" (Rosh Hashanah 18b), which atones for the Jewish people.

Complete Repentance

It is written, "The men came al [lit. 'upon'] the women" (Exodus 35:22).

As we know, the offerings for the Temple represented a kind of penitence for the sin of the golden calf. Now the Sages have said, "In the place where ba'alei teshuvah [penitents] stand, even the wholly righteous cannot stand" (Berachot 34b). It follows that the men who sinned through the golden calf had now become ba'alei teshuvah, being at a higher level than the women, who did not participate in this sin. Hence it is written, "The men came upon the women" – they were above them.

– Chiddushei HaRim

By the Merit of Righteous Women

When the men arrived, they found the women already there, for they had hurried to bring their offering to the Sanctuary. Such was the hallmark of the women of that generation: They did not participate in the making of the golden calf, for they had absolutely refused to give their jewelry for that goal. Now, for the Sanctuary, they hurried to be the first ones to bring an offering, joyfully donating their finest possessions.

– The Malbim

Everything is Proclaimed in Advance

It is written, "These are the accounts of the Mishkan [Sanctuary], Mishkan HaEdut [the Sanctuary of Testimony]" (Exodus 38:21).

Rabbeinu Bechaye said, "The word Mishkan [Sanctuary] has a numerical value of 410, which corresponds to the years that the first Temple stood. The numerical value of the term HaMishkan [the Sanctuary], added to the number of its letters (5), gives us 420, corresponding to the years that the second Temple stood. The term HaEdut [the Testimony] has a numerical value of 479, which corresponds to the years that the Sanctuary was used before the construction of the first Temple." Why do we need to add 5 to the calculation of the second Temple? The Chatam Sofer said, "This teaches us by allusion that 5 things would be lacking in the second Temple."

From Tragedy Comes Redemption

At first Rashi states that the word Mishkan [Sanctuary] alludes to the destruction of the Temple, and then he says that the Sanctuary is a testimony to the fact that the Shechinah dwells upon Israel. We can understand this

REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

These are the Things

It is written, “Moses assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and said to them: ‘These are the things that the L-RD commanded, to do them: On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for the L-RD. Whoever does work on it shall be put to death’ ” (Exodus 35:1-2).

In the Midrash the Sages explain, “From start to finish in the Torah, no other parsha begins with the expression ‘he assembled.’ The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: Assemble a large gathering and publicly explain to them the laws of Shabbat, so that the generations to come will learn from you to gather every Shabbat in houses of study to learn and teach the Torah, to know what is permitted and what is forbidden, in order for My great Name to be praised among My people.”

The Chafetz Chaim warned, “News of an outrageous thing has reached me. It seems that Shabbat and the holidays – which were fixed to be days of holy assembly in order to spread Torah and the fear of Heaven, as it is written: “Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it” – have been transformed on account of our numerous sins. The Satan has become stronger: Every eve of Shabbat and the holidays, newspapers are printed that are twice as thick as during the week, with journalists trying to fill them with all kinds of frivolous jokes and crude things. These editions are printed on the eve of Shabbat and the holidays, and many of our Jewish brothers spend the entire holy Shabbat reading such foolishness. Woe to the ears that hear this, and woe to the eyes that see this, that people are completely ridiculing the sanctity of Shabbat and the holidays, for even during the week it is forbidden to read such things! The punishment of scorners applies even to the writers and printers of such material! Even a person who hears such things and keeps silent, the Sages say that the wrath of Hashem will fall upon him, and how much more does it apply to one who leads thousands of people into it! They are sinners, they make others sin, and they will not be allowed to repent!”

The Chafetz Chaim ended by saying, “I am completely surprised by the upright individuals among our Jewish brothers, those who believe in Hashem and His Torah, and who know the gravity of this sin, because many of them allow themselves to be drawn into it and enticed by the words of the evil inclination, spending several hours a day reading it. And yet they understand the gravity of this sin! Why do they not pay attention to a negligence in Torah study, as well as to the terrible sin of ridicule!

“Furthermore, they are caught in the sin of the public, for the masses of simple folk, in seeing that even upright individuals read these newspapers, allow themselves to do the same. Hence they cause others to commit the very same sin, for if they were to refrain from reading such things, many others would do the same. I am also greatly surprised by the fact that they themselves multiply their requests and supplications to Hashem each day, asking Him to send us Eliyahu HaNavi and Mashiach. How dare they make such requests? Can they welcome Eliyahu HaNavi while being immersed in ridicule and frivolity? Is this the kind of preparation required for their arrival? Will their faces not be covered with shame when Eliyahu HaNavi finds them like this?”

– From Tuvcha Yabiu

– From the Letters of the Chafetz Chaim

according to what our Sages said concerning Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva. When they arrived at the Temple mount and saw a fox emerging from the place of the Holy of Holies, they all began to cry, except for Rabbi Akiva, who began to laugh. When they asked him why he was laughing, he replied: “Why are you crying?” They answered, “A place of which it was once said, ‘Any stranger who approaches shall die’ [Numbers 1:51] has now become the abode of foxes, and should we not cry?” He said, “That’s why I’m laughing, for since the prophecy of Uriah has been fulfilled: ‘Zion will be ploughed over as a field’ [Micah 3:12], Zechariah’s prophesy will also be fulfilled: ‘Old men and old women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem’ [Zechariah 8:4]. They said to him, “Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!” (Makkot 24a-b).

Thus the very fact that the Temple was destroyed and prophecies of tragedy were fulfilled proves that the Shechinah will dwell upon Israel once again, at the time of the Final Redemption, and that all the good predicted by the same prophets will also come true.

– HaDrash VeHaIyun

Overview of the Parsha: Vayakhel

In Parsha Vayakhel, once the Children of Israel are forgiven for the sin of the golden calf, they receive the order to solidify their relationship with Hashem by means of the Sanctuary that is among them. Moses brings Israel the order to build the Sanctuary, and he begins by warning them about work that is forbidden on Shabbat. Concerning the construction itself, the parsha describes the offerings that must be brought to the craftsmen in order for them to build the Sanctuary.

Overview of the Parsha: Pekudei

In Parsha Pekudei, the Torah summarizes the work of the Sanctuary, with an accounting being done by those responsible for the work. This includes the making of the priestly garments, the completion of the work, the presentation of the Sanctuary to Moses, and his assembly of the Sanctuary. The parsha and book of Exodus end by the fact that Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud rested upon it, meaning that the people were now ready for the Shechinah to dwell among them. However Moses is not yet called by Hashem, as he would be in the book of Leviticus, to enter the Tent of Meeting and receive instructions on how the Shechinah would come and dwell.

ESHET HAYIL

By the Merit of Her Tears

It is written, “You shall not afflict any widow or orphan” (Exodus 22:21).

We can understand the considerable power of a widow’s prayers and tears by a story told by the gaon Rabbi Aryeh Levine Zatzal. As he was walking along the streets of Jerusalem, he once saw a woman seated by the light of a small candle mending socks. Such work is unheard of in our time, but back then, some 60 years ago, socks with holes in them were sent to be repaired, the price of which was a few cents. It was late at night, and the candle provided only a little light.

“Why are you mending socks so late at night, and by such a dim light?” Rabbi Aryeh Levine asked her with amazement. “I’m a widow,” replied the woman as her tears dripped onto the sock she was holding. “With the few cents that I earn from this work, I pay for the Torah education of my fatherless son!”

Do you know who this widow was? She was the mother of the gaon Rabbi Betzalel Zolty Zatzal, who later became the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. This is how she raised her fatherless son – through great effort, copious tears, and fervent prayers that ascended to the Throne of Glory. By the merit of her prayers, by the merit of her tears, she raised her son in Torah.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

The Gerer Rebbe – The Author of Beit Israel

Rabbi Israel Alter Zatzal, the Gerer Rebbe, was born on Tishri 24, 5655 in the Chassidut capital of Ger in Poland, his father being Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter Zatzal, the elder Gerer Rebbe. From his youth, Rabbi Israel conducted himself with extreme piety. He studied Torah throughout his life, and he was known as a great gaon, a scholar in every field of Torah, as well as a giant of Chassidut. In 5700 he went to live in Israel with his father, and when his father passed away in 5708, he became the Rebbe of the Chassidic community of Ger, according to the wishes of his father as expressed in his will. From the time he became the leader of the house of Ger, Rabbi Israel Alter did a great deal to reestablish the ruins of Chassidut, most of whose supporters had perished in the Holocaust. He assembled the last vestiges of Chassidut that had been saved from the fire, and he also brought closer those who began to gather around him. He invested an enormous effort into the education and training of a new generation, based on the foundation of Torah and Chassidut. He worked greatly at strengthening the study of Torah among chassidim, and he watched over their progress from near and far, placing great emphasis on the young. By his special leadership abilities, he was able to infuse sanctity and purity into numerous households, be they near or far. He succeeded in strengthening the house of Ger, and over the years, by dint of his influence, he became a column of fire that walked before the camp of the chassidim. Countless people from all walks of life went to see him for advice, and his home became a beacon in every area. He was respected throughout the country and around the world, aware of everything touching upon sanctity, and he was known among all the great figures of Israel as the one to see in regards to anything dealing with the direction of Judaism and the Torah.

THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

Respect for the Torah

A person approached Rabbi Akiva and said to him, “Rabbi, teach me the entire Torah all at once!” He replied, “My son, if our teacher Moses spent forty days and forty nights on the mountain in order to learn it, can you expect to learn it all at once? I will teach you a great principle of the Torah: What you would not want others to do to you, do not do to others. If you want no one to wrong you, do not wrong anyone. If you want no one to take what belongs to you, do not take what belongs to anyone.” This person left and went to find his friends, and they ventured into field that was filled with wheat. One of his friends took an ear of wheat, while his other friend took another. He, however, took nothing. They found another field that was filled with cabbage, and again his two friends took some, while he took nothing. They said to him, “Why haven’t you taken anything?” He replied, “Rabbi Akiva taught me: ‘What you would not want others to do to you, do not do to others. If you want no one to wrong you, do not wrong anyone. If you want no one to take what belongs to you, do not take what belongs to anyone.’”

Hillel the elder stood at the entrance of Jerusalem as people were going out to work. He asked them, “How much will you earn today?” One person replied, “One dinar.” Another said, “Two dinarim.” He said to them, “What will you do with this money?” They answered, “We need it to live.” He said to them, “Do you not want to come and inherit the Torah and the life of this world and that of the World to Come?” Hillel did this all his days, until he gathered them under the wings of Heaven.”

– Avoth D’Rabbi Nathan

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

The Danger of Habit

It is written, “Whoever comes in by way of the north gate to prostrate himself shall go out by way of the south gate, and whoever comes in by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came in. Rather, he shall go out opposite it” (Ezekiel 46:9).

The gaon Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz said, “The human soul tends toward habit. This can sometimes be disastrous, as when it initially has a positive effect on a person, one that burns in him like a fire, but eventually dies out over time. Hence we must be careful not to let this fire go out. We must maintain our initial enthusiasm. A person who applies himself will see a blessing in his ethical development and fear of Heaven.

The Chasid Ya’avetz explained the reason for this in his commentary on Pirkei Avoth 1:4, stating that the reason why this verse says that one who enters by the north gate must go out by the south gate (and vice-versa), is that the Holy One, blessed be He, was concerned that a visitor should not see the same gate twice, lest in his eyes it becomes equal to the gate of his own house, and lest the walls of the Temple become equal to the walls of his own house. That is what led to the sin of the golden calf, the Tent of Meeting being among them for so long that they considered it to be something ordinary and said, “Let us make a god.” Moses sensed this, which is why he moved the Tent far outside the camp.

A respect for holiness hovers over one who ascends to the Temple as soon as he enters it. To conserve this respect and prevent him from slackening, the Holy One, blessed be He, made certain that a person should not leave by the same gate, meaning that he not see the same gate twice, lest his respect diminishes and he considers the gate and walls of the Temple to be like the gate and walls of his own house. From here we learn that a servant of Hashem should be very careful that any spiritual awakening he experiences does not die out. He must work very hard at conserving the novelty of this awakening, so that he constantly remains like at first. In this way he can ascend to ever-higher spiritual levels.

A TRUE STORY

Giving Wholeheartedly

It is written, “To conceive of finely done works” (Exodus 35:32).

The Volozhin yeshiva sent out someone to collect donations in small towns and villages. He once returned from a fundraising campaign and brought Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin the money he had collected, along with lists of donors, and said: “If you had a wagon to give me, I could visit many more homes and collect much more money.” Rabbi Chaim agreed, and purchased a wagon and horse for him with the yeshiva’s money. One day this emissary told Rabbi Chaim that a wealthy donor had refused to give anything this time, saying: “I give for Torah, nor for horses!” Rabbi Chaim sent a message to the donor in which he said, “The holy Torah lists the qualities of Betzalel the son of Uri the son of Hur, who would ‘conceive of finely done works.’ What were these thoughts? In the Sanctuary, the people had been told to give ‘willingly,’ which is why Betzalel received the ability to perceive people’s intentions: A person who gave wholeheartedly merited for his contribution to go into the Ark of the Covenant, located in the Holy of Holies. With regards to a person whose intentions were a little less pure, Betzalel directed his contribution for the Parochet, the Menorah, or the Shulchan, all in accordance with the donor’s purity of heart. The same applies to those who support Torah: If they give with a completely pure heart, their money will go into studying the holy Torah; if their purity is less, Heaven will direct their donation towards wagons and horses.”