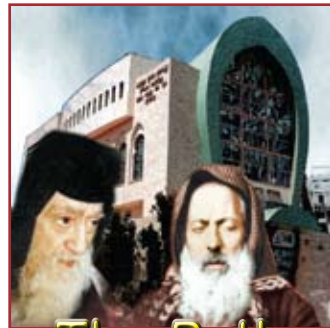


## PREPARE YOURSELF IN THE PASSAGEWAY IN ORDER TO ENTER THE PALACE (BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)



### The Path To Follow

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### GUARD YOUR TONGUE!

#### The Power of Habit

Parents must educate and train their children from an early age to avoid Lashon Harah. Habit is a major factor that prevents people from paying attention to this sin. A person who from childhood says whatever comes to mind will find it difficult to change his nature and habits later on. The earlier that parents educate their children not to speak Lashon Harah (as well as other kinds of forbidden speech, such as cursing, lying, and swearing), the easier it will be for them to avoid such speech in the future. However this can only be achieved when parents set a personal example for their children, which is why it is better not to speak about anyone, for better or for worse. This is just one of the ways in which we and our children can avoid forbidden speech.

**I**n Parshiot Terumah, Tetzaveh, and Vayakhel we learned about the offerings that the Children of Israel brought for the service of the Sanctuary, as well as the making of the Sanctuary's vessels and the priestly garments. Now in Parsha Pekudei we read of how Moses and all the wise-hearted men did everything that the Holy One, blessed be He, instructed them to do in erecting the Sanctuary. This included the placing of all the vessels in their set place within the Sanctuary, in accordance with Hashem's will.

In the previous section, Parsha Vayakhel, we mentioned that the most amazing and important vessel among these was naturally the Ark of the Covenant, which proved to the Children of Israel that the Shechinah dwelled among them. Furthermore, the vessels of the Sanctuary represent the body of man, with the Ark representing the brain, the center of man's service to G-d. We must therefore understand what the Ark represents for us in our daily lives, and how we can learn to serve Hashem in this world as a preparation for the World to Come. Made of wood, the Ark was covered with gold inside and out. On its top edge, the Creator commanded that a crown be made to adorn it, and it too was made of gold. How was the Ark carried? It was equipped with four rings, one at each corner, and gold-covered poles of acacia wood were placed through these rings. It was with these poles that the Ark was transported. Hashem commanded, "The poles shall remain in the rings of the Ark. They may not be removed from it" (Exodus 25:15). This means that they were always fixed within the rings, never to be removed. In fact the Sages have said, "One who removes...the poles of the Ark receives the punishment of lashes" (Yoma 72a). However the permanent placement of the poles within the rings raises a major question: If Hashem wanted the poles to always remain by the sides of the Ark, why didn't He command them to be directly fixed to the Ark, just as the gold crown and rings were fixed to it? In fact why not eliminate the rings altogether and affix the poles directly to the Ark with the gold that covered it? In this way they would be permanently attached to the Ark itself and could never be removed! Why would Hashem command rings to be made and to have poles slipped through them, which seems like a temporary measure, only to command that the poles "may not be removed from it"? This can be fully understood in light of what we have just said, namely that the vessels of the Sanctuary allude to man and his way of serving Hashem. Throughout life, a person must strive to become like the holy Ark, a vessel that contains holiness, that contains Torah. Thus when a tzaddik dies, we eulogize him by saying: "The holy Ark has been captured" (Ketubot 104a).

Similarly, a person should try and cover himself with good middot both inside and out, just as the Ark was covered with gold all around. When a person performs a mitzvah, he should always try and add a gold crown to it, to embellish the mitzvah by adorning it, as it is written: "This is my G-d, and I will adorn Him" (Exodus 15:2). Here the Sages explain: "Adorn yourself before Him in mitzvot" (Shabbat 133b; Sukkah 11b).

How can we lift and transport this holy Ark? How can we climb as high as possible in the rungs of Torah and the fear

of Heaven? Just as the Ark of the Sanctuary was transported with poles, a person should grasp the poles of the Ark. What exactly do these poles represent? It is written, "You shall make poles of acacia atzei [wood]" (Exodus 25:10), an allusion to the Torah, which is also called etz [a tree] of life (Perkei Avoth 6:7). In other words, by persistently laboring in the study of Torah, we elevate ourselves and progress to ever-higher spiritual levels. It means that we put an effort into supporting it and those who study it, as it is written: "It is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and happy are those who support it" (Proverbs 3:18). The more we grasp these poles, the more we perceive the Torah's true value and greatness. Little by little, we will come to love and understand it more, to the point of dying over our love for it. We will look to fulfill mitzvot and study the Torah's sacred letters, and we will spend a great deal of money for the Torah and its mitzvot, as did the Tannaim when they dispensed large sums to fulfill mitzvot.

Those around us will see this and certainly think that we are not acting properly. They will think that this shittim (acacia) wood is made of shtut (foolishness), claiming that it is absurd to spend so much money on mitzvot. However a person who loves Torah will not allow himself to come undone. He will diligently continue, without interruption, to grasp the poles of the Torah, for they "shall not be removed from it" (Exodus 25:15). This is because Hashem wants him to continue studying and supporting the Torah, as well as to continue fulfilling mitzvot.

Although Hashem desires diligence in this sacred service, He still did not want the poles to be permanently attached to the Ark. Why not? It is because Hashem wants the rings. He wants everyone to make a ring about himself, a protective barrier. He wants us to set limits for ourselves and establish fences that outline what is permitted and forbidden, just a fence is placed on a roof (Deuteronomy 22:8), for we must sanctify ourselves in what is permitted (Yevamot 20a). Guarding ourselves in this way will lead us along the path to the house of G-d.

What do the rings represent? The Holy One, blessed be He, knows that a person regards his money as his very life, for his sustenance depends on it. When a person gives tzeddakah, he is giving a little of himself along with it, for it is a very difficult mitzvah to fulfill. On the other hand, Hashem does not want even a single Jew to be sad, other than for the sake of encouraging him to wake up and realize that he can, at any time, give a little of his money in this world and acquire an important mitzvah, namely tzeddakah. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do for this? He insisted that the poles – an allusion to the support of Torah – be placed in the rings, for the rings are round and recall the day of death, as all round objects do. This alludes to the mitzvah of tzeddakah, a mitzvah that we carry with us after our time on earth has ended. Performing this mitzvah is a good way to prepare for eternal life in the World to Come. In this way a person will remember, wake up, and give tzeddakah, enabling him to emerge victorious in his difficult fight against the evil inclination, the merit of which will protect him for eternity.

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

## We're Going Back Home!

*It is written, "The Children of Israel did everything that the L-RD commanded Moses, so did they do" (Exodus 39:32).*

Mashiach has come, and with him deliverance has arrived. One after another, the enemies of Israel submit to us. The house of our old enemy has passed to the great men of Torah, to do with as they please. After discussing the matter, they decide to use this house to make a yeshiva (Midrash from the book Tuvcha Yabiu).

This seems strange, doesn't it? It seems more logical to destroy this house from top to bottom, without leaving any trace of it. Nevertheless the same thing happened during Purim, as our Sages tell us. Achashverosh gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Mordechai. It was in that house – from which numerous plots were hatched against the Jewish people – that Mordechai established a Talmud Torah for children. The great men of his time decided that one does not conquer darkness by means of more darkness, which is to say by means of destruction. We must not ignore what happened, for our strength is based on our holy Torah. The darkness and destruction that the enemies of the Jewish people wanted to bring upon this world can only be conquered by light, by the light of Torah. The great men of Israel were those who revealed this hidden light to us, explaining exactly what constitutes an act of construction and an act of destruction. Of this we are told, "Destruction by old men is construction, and construction by boys is destruction" (Megillah 31b). This week's parsha praises the Children of Israel for the construction of the Sanctuary by stating, "Everything that the L-RD commanded Moses, so did they do." They accepted Hashem's words, which came from the lips of Moses, the great Torah figure of the generation. They put their desires completely aside and did not calculate the pros and cons of complying. It was not because of a lack of self-confidence, nor on account of a lack of understanding, for they were the generation of knowledge, the ones who received the Torah. In their vast understanding, they clearly realized that the Creator's will is for us to obey our teachers without changing any of their holy words.

Rabbi Shalom Schwadron once had to travel abroad. On the way to the airport, he went to visit his teacher, Rabbi Leib Chasman, to receive a blessing from him. Arriving before his teacher, Rabbi Shalom explained his plan and asked for a blessing. From his teacher's reply, however, he understood that he did not agree with his trip, nor did he want to bless him. As he was leaving, Rabbi Shalom said with a tone of authority to those around him, "We're going back home," and nobody could convince him to change his mind. He said, "When we go to a Rav with a question, we must listen to what the Rav is actually saying, not to what we want to hear, and I'm not traveling without his blessing." A person must completely yield to his teacher's will, something that we learn from a man as great as Rabbi Shalom Schwadron.

## A Pearl From the Rav

At the beginning of this week's parsha we read about the offerings of gold, silver, and copper that were brought for the Sanctuary, with the text recording the quantity of each material that was brought.

In his book Pahad David, Rabbi David Pinto Shlita asks why the text records what was done with the silver and copper, but not with the gold. In explaining this, the Rav states that we may say that the word zahav ("gold") alludes to three days: Shabbat (zayin, the seventh day), Thursday (hei, the fifth day), and Monday (beit, the second day), these being the days when the Torah is read, as Moses and Ezra commanded.

Now just as the text does not record what was done with the gold, a person must not count the hours when he is learning Torah, nor should he question its purpose. His duty is to put an effort into studying it, not to weigh the pros and cons of doing so.

This is why the Torah does not tell us what was done with the gold, which

symbolizes Torah study. When it comes to fixed times for study, a person will be asked to give an accounting on the day of judgment. Our time is not limited then, and we must devote ourselves to learning Torah day and night, without checking the time to see if we have finished. It is only by fixing times for learning Torah that we can ascend to higher spiritual levels, until we arrive in the presence of Hashem. Amen, may it be so!

## Rendering an Account

*It is written, "These are the accounts of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Testimony, which were counted by the order of Moses" (Exodus 38:21).*

Rabbi Shlomo of Radomsk said, "We find in the Midrash that the Children of Israel were suspicious of Moses regarding the offerings made for the Sanctuary. He finally had to give them an exact account which proved that all their offerings had gone directly into the work of the Sanctuary, and only then did they believe him."

We need to understand how they could have harbored such suspicions. Did they not know that Moses disdained silver and gold? Had they not seen how, as everyone was occupied with collecting the spoils of Egypt by the sea, Moses alone went to deal with Joseph's casket? We can interpret things in another way. All Israel knew that the Sanctuary had been built through generosity, and any donations given without pure intentions were not accepted. Now everyone was small in their own eyes, and therefore they were afraid that their donations had not been used for the Sanctuary. They all thought, "My offering certainly didn't deserve to be used in building the Sanctuary. How could I have merited it?" They all went to see Moses and asked him which offerings had remained, meaning which did not merit to participate in this holy task. No explanation satisfied them until Moses gave them an account which proved that all their offerings, to the very last one, had been used entirely for the work. He said to them, "You are all tzaddikim, and all your offerings merited to be used for the Sanctuary."

## The Jewish Viewpoint

*It is written, "These are the accounts of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Testimony, which were counted by the order of Moses" (Exodus 38:21).*

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, the Rav of Lutzk, questions why they asked for an exact accounting from Moses, who had asked them to give for the Sanctuary. They did not ask for an accounting when gold was collected to make the golden calf, even though only a small calf emerged from all the gold that had been collected for it! Thus in every generation, why do people ask for an accounting from those who collect money for tzeddakah, but not from those who collect for all kinds of "calves"?

He answers by saying that, deep down, every Jew wants to do good. Therefore as long as a Jew gives for the Sanctuary, meaning for a holy cause, he wants all his money to go exclusively to that cause. Yet when he allows himself to be enticed by the evil inclination and gives money for a "calf," his heart protests even as he is giving, and afterwards he will be content to hear that his money was not used for that purpose and that no sin has been attributed to him. In that case he cares little if those who collected his money used some of it for themselves.

– Ma'ayanot HaNetzach

## So Did They Do

*It is written, "According to all that the L-RD commanded Moses, so did the Children of Israel do" (Exodus 39:42).*

We may understand this verse by means of a parable: A king came to a town where the residents were desperately poor, with nothing to offer the king as a gift. There was a wealthy individual living there as well, a wise-hearted man whom the king especially loved. He had the means to offer the king a beautiful gift, but he wanted the residents in town to benefit from it. What did he do? He ordered that a very precious object be made, one composed of various parts fashioned from gold, silver, and copper. Each part was to be made by a specific craftsman.

# REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT

## Those Who Sow in Tears

*It is written, "Moses erected the Sanctuary" (Exodus 40:18).*

We are standing at a certain spot in Bnei Brak, and before us a large building is being constructed. There seems to be nothing special about this particular site, for numerous buildings, both large and small, are built throughout the country every day. What is so special about this one? Let's take a tour and look around. Before us we see a graying, dignified looking man pulling a heavy iron bar that will be used in one of the building's columns. This may be a bit unusual, but it doesn't pique our curiosity.

Great Torah figures have been invited for the laying of the building's cornerstone. This begins to tell us a little about the goal of the structure, which seems destined for greatness. Indeed, even a dignified-looking Jew is participating in this project.

The work progresses, and we see this elderly man being particularly active, with a hand in everything that takes place. This man is none other than Rabbi Shlomo Kahaneman, and the building under construction is the Ponevezh yeshiva. Rabbi Shlomo devotes himself entirely to the job of building the yeshiva, which today is one of the most prestigious yeshivot in Bnei Brak.

Like Moses in his time, Rabbi Shlomo shows us how to leave personal considerations behind when it comes to projects for the sake of Heaven. The construction of the yeshiva is similar to that of the Sanctuary, a place that united the entire Jewish people towards its Father in Heaven. Hence its construction is unlike any other. We need to realize that whenever we are involved in something holy, the evil inclination will try to mislead us. It knows that wherever we study our holy Torah, it will be a place where we are building the only weapon that can defeat it. Hence such endeavors require many prayers on our part. As we know, when the cornerstone of the yeshiva was laid in place, psalms were recited with tearful emotion. In fact it was the Chazon Ish himself who was present on this occasion to recite, "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalms 126:5).

It is not only with regards to this edifice that our path is strewn with obstacles and pitfalls. We must realize that the task of building ourselves is just as difficult, and therefore we must take it upon ourselves to be guided by a Rav. Just as the Children of Israel built the components of the Sanctuary and presented all of them to Moses so he could place them properly, so too must we bring our work to a Rav so he can guide us on how to build our own sanctuary.

Since many craftsmen had taken part in the work, the wealthy man took the object and went to the king along with all the craftsmen. The gift pleased the king, and he asked the wealthy man to describe all the work that had gone into making it, as well as the names of everyone who had worked on it. The wealthy man immediately pointed to the craftsmen, and they presented themselves one by one to the king. In this way almost everyone in town was able to see the king's face.

Moses acted in this way as well. When the work on the Sanctuary had been completed, work accomplished through the generosity of all Israel, he presented all of them to Hashem by saying, "All Your children Israel were craftsmen in the work of the Sanctuary, for they all took part in its construction."

– Ohel Yaakov

### Their Plans Will be Thwarted

*It is written, "For the cloud of the L-RD was upon the Sanctuary by day, and fire was upon it by night, before the eyes of all the House of Israel throughout their journeys" (Exodus 40:38).*

Throughout their journeys, in every trip they make and every incident they encounter during their wanderings in exile, the Children of Israel will never be rejected or abandoned by Hashem. During the best of times, "by day," the pillar of cloud will go before them and serve as their guide in the desert of exile, while "at night," during the dark and difficult times of poverty and persecution, the pillar of cloud will be like a fire that devours those who attempt to destroy them.

They may conspire and legislate against the Jewish people, but their plans will be thwarted because Hashem is with us like a pillar of fire, which protects us during the darkness of the night.

– Avnei Ezel

### Overview of the Parsha

In Parsha Pekudei, the Torah completes the subject of the work of the Sanctuary. This account includes the names of those responsible for the work, as well as the amounts of metal and fabric used. The making of the garments is also described, as well as the completion of the work, the presentation of the Sanctuary to Moses, and his assembly of it. The parsha and the book of Exodus end with the statement, "Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting, for the cloud rested upon it," meaning that the people were now ready for the Shechinah to dwell among them. Moses was not yet summoned by Hashem to enter the Tent of Meeting in order to be shown how the Shechinah would dwell there.

## EISHET CHAYIL

### Why Leave So Soon?

The hospitality of Mrs. Chaya Schechter was exemplary. Indeed, her home on HaAliyah Street in Tel Aviv resembled the tent of Abraham, for countless visitors passed through her door.

A sick woman and her three young children were once staying there as guests. Mrs. Schechter paid special attention to them, each day ensuring that the mother regained her strength. With maternal devotion she cooked healthy food for them and saw to it that the mother got plenty of rest. Needless to say, she also took it upon herself to care for the children. Some time later, the mother finally regained her strength and wanted to return home with her family. When she went to bid farewell to Mrs. Schechter, the reaction she received amazed her: "Why leave so soon?" It was simply impossible for Mrs. Schechter to part from her guests!

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

### Rabbi Avraham Landau of Tchechenov

Rabbi Avraham was born in Prantzav to the saintly Rabbi Raphael Zatzal, a hidden tzaddik who was known as a miracle worker. In fact many great figures of the time said that he was one of the 36 hidden tzaddikim of his generation. In his youth, people could already discern incredible talents in the young Avraham, and his father brought him to the town of Plotsk in order to study Torah. He quickly became famous as a child prodigy for whom the Torah held no secrets. At the age of marriage, Rabbi Avraham wed the daughter of Rabbi Dan Landau, a prominent figure from Plotsk. He continued to study, all while concealing his wondrous deeds from everyone. From time to time he would go and visit the saintly Rabbi Fishel of Strikov Zatzal.

When his father-in-law, Rabbi Dan Landau, lost his fortune, Rabbi Avraham was forced to accept a position as the Rav of Tchechenov. Rabbi Avraham remained in Tchechenov for 56 years, teaching Torah to his disciples. During all that time, however, he refused to become Rebbe, though he was very close to the Chiddushei HaRim of Ger Zatzal. When the decree regarding Chassidic garments was enacted in Poland, Rabbi Avraham supported the Chiddushei HaRim. They both ruled that it was completely forbidden to dress like a non-Jew, and that one should be prepared to die before changing his Jewish attire. After the Chiddushei HaRim's death, Rabbi Avraham agreed to become Rebbe. He led the community for nine years, from 5626 until his passing on Adar 5, 5635. May his merit protect us all.

## IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

### To the Right or the Left

*It is written, "HaMenorot [The candelabra], five to the right and five to the left" (I Kings 7:49).*

We must say that this verse contains an allusion. We know that the Menorah alludes to the Torah, and according to the words of our Sages: "He who desires to become wise should turn to the south... [the sign being that] the Menorah is to the south" (Bava Batra 25b). A person should ensure that all his steps and endeavors, whether they be to the right or to the left, are in accordance with the dictates of the Torah. He must not take a single step without first checking with the Torah that he is following the example of the Menorah. That is, just as the Menorah's light shined in the Temple and radiated outwards, spreading throughout Jerusalem and beyond (to the point that the Sages said that from Jerusalem one could see the markings of a coin in Jericho), so too must the Torah light a person's way. We must always have the five books of the Torah to our right, which is a way of coming closer to the Temple. We must also have them to our left, meaning that when we distance ourselves a little from a place of holiness, we must always be surrounded by Torah. This will ensure that our deeds are always done solely in accordance with the holy Torah.

This is what Scripture is telling us here. The Menorot, which allude to the Torah, must be "five to the right and five to the left," meaning that in everything a person does, be it to the right or to the left, there must always be the five books of the holy Torah, and without them he must not take a single step.

## A TRUE STORY

### The End of the Work

*It is written, "Moses erected the Sanctuary" (Exodus 40:18).*

During the time of the gaon Rabbi Shlomo Kahaneman Zatzal, as the Ponevezh yeshiva was being built, there was a period when concrete was scarce. Whoever needed concrete for construction work was required to present a request and wait his turn until the authorities allotted it to him.

When it came time for Rabbi Shlomo to receive his share of concrete, he hired workers for the day and they all waited for the cement trucks to arrive. As it turned out, the load of cement had been diverted to another site, meaning that it was not going to show up that day. The workers eventually went to see Rabbi Shlomo and asked him to be paid for their time, saying that they should not lose money because of him. The Rav agreed with them, but added: "I hired you for the entire day, and your shift is not over. The cement hasn't arrived, but I have another job for you. Everyone is to go to the Beit Midrash and study until his shift is over, and I will pay his entire salary."

All the workers made their way to the Beit Midrash, but only one managed to stay there and study for the entire length of his shift. All the others renounced their wages and left.

## THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

### The Children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Rabbi Yochanan ben Matia needed some workers for a certain task. He said to his son, "Go out and hire some workers." His son went and hired some workmen, telling them that they would receive the usual wages for such work in addition to a meal. When he returned to his father, he said: "I did as you instructed me. I hired some workers under the usual conditions, and naturally I also promised them a meal." This did not please Rabbi Yochanan, who said to his son: "If you had only stated that their wages would be the norm for such work – and even if you had said nothing at all – it would have been clear that they would receive the usual wages for such a task, which would also include a meal, meaning bread and vegetables. However since you explicitly promised them a meal, they may think that you will give them more than the normal allotment of bread and vegetables. In that case, even if you give them a meal befitting King Solomon, you will not have fulfilled your obligations to them. This is because they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Abraham gave more to his guests than King Solomon did! See what you have done? Before they start working, go and explicitly tell them that insofar as the meal you promised them is concerned, you meant bread and vegetables only, as is the norm for such work. If they are not satisfied with this, they should not even start working. They will then clearly understand what you are promising, and they will be able to make their decision based on these conditions."

Naturally, Rabbi Yochanan's son did as his father said, learning from this incident to always pay great attention to his words.

– Adapted from Bava Metzia 83a