



Publication HEVRAT PINTO
Under Aegis of RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA
32, rue du Plateau - 75019 PARIS - FRANCE
Tel: +331 48 03 53 89 - Fax +331 42 06 00 33
www.hevratpinto.org - hevratpinto@aol.com
Responsible of publication: Hanania Soussan

בס"ד

Path

350
VAETCHANAN To Follow
13 AV 5770 - 07/24/ 2010

LEAVE NO PLACE FOR THE EVIL INCLINATION (BY RABBI DAVID PINTO SHLITA)

It is written, "You shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for tatafot between your eyes" (Devarim 6:8). The Torah mentions the tefillin of the arm before that of the head, whereas the Rambam adopts the reverse order, stating: "These four parshiot – Kadash Li, Vehaya Ki Yeviecha Hashem in the book of Shemot, and Shema, Vehaya Im Shamo'a – are written separately, and we cover them with leather. This is called tefillin, and we place them on the head and attach them on the arm" (Hilchot Tefillin U'Mezuzah 1:1). Hence the Rambam mentions the tefillin of the head before that of the arm, contrary to the order appearing in the Torah. This difference needs to be explained.

Let us first cite a statement made by the Tur regarding the intentions one must have when donning tefillin: "We should bear in mind that G-d commanded us to place these four parshiot, which contain the unity of His Name and the exodus from Egypt, upon the arm to correspond to the heart, and upon the head to correspond to the brain, in order that we may recall the exodus from Egypt by the miracles and wonders that He did for us, and which demonstrate His unity. He is the only one in the universe, and to Him belong power and dominion over higher and lower beings, to do with them according to His will" (Tur on Orach Chaim 25).

In the Gemara the Sages also say, "The evil inclination resembles a fly, and it dwells between the two entrances of the heart" (Berachot 61a). Commenting on the verse, "I will distance the northern one [tzfoni] from you" (Joel 2:20), the Sages state: "[This] refers to the evil inclination, which is constantly hidden [tzafun] in the heart of man" (Sukkah 52a). Why is the evil inclination described as "hidden"? It is because it enters a person's heart little by little. In fact it cannot tell a person, "Stop serving Hashem and go serve idols," for he would not listen to it.

Likewise, the evil inclination will not try to entice a person to commit a grave sin, for he will certainly not listen to it. However it begins with something very small, until eventually it tells him: "Go serve idols." Thus we read, "He who tears his garments in anger, he who breaks his vessels in anger, and he who scatters his money in anger, regard him as an idolater. Such are the tactics of the evil inclination: Today it says to him, 'Do this,' tomorrow it tells him, 'Do that,'

until it tells him: 'Go and serve idols,' and he goes and serves them" (Shabbat 105b).

In order to be saved from the tricks of the evil inclination, the Holy One, blessed be He, told the Children of Israel: "I am giving you an easy mitzvah, that you may be protected from the evil inclination found in the heart, the mitzvah of tefillin. One is placed on the arm, which corresponds to the heart, in order to subdue the evil inclination found therein, and the other is placed on the head, to prevent it from entering the heart and making its way to the head, for the evil inclination cannot enter the head first and entice a person to commit grave sins. Instead, it first enters the heart and entices him to commit small transgressions that seem unimportant to him, hiding its real intentions. It simply tells him to take this or that mitzvah lightly – one day this one and the next day that one – until it finally says to him: "Commit all the sins of the Torah."

What Did David Fear?

Our Sages have said, "At first the evil inclination is like a spider web, but ultimately it becomes like wagon ropes, as it is said: 'Woe to those who pull iniquity upon themselves with cords of falsehood, and sin like the ropes of a wagon' [Isaiah 5:18]" (Sukkah 52a).

We also find something similar in Parsha Eikev, where it is written: "Eikev [if] you hearken to these ordinances and observe and perform them" (Devarim 7:12). In the Midrash the Sages have said that David always feared the day of judgment, saying: "Master of the universe, I do not fear the difficult mitzvot, but those which are easy [which people tread upon with their heel, eikev], lest one transgress them without knowing it, for they seem easy. Now You have said that we must pay attention to both easy mitzvot and difficult mitzvot."

Hence David was not afraid of grave sins, for he knew that he would not commit them. What was he afraid of then? He feared minor sins, which people secretly allow themselves to commit.

What Can a Person Do to Become Wise?

This is why the Rambam reversed the order written in the verse, starting with the tefillin of the head, so as to tell us that if a person allows the evil inclination to enter his heart, it will end up reaching his head. It will not remain hidden in his heart, and it will begin to

tempt him to openly commit sins. We must therefore be careful not to neglect easy mitzvot – and especially not difficult mitzvot – for by neglecting the easy ones, we will end up neglecting the difficult ones.

We find a similar idea with regards to Adam, to whom G-d said: "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, you must not eat thereof, for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die" (Bereshith 2:16-17). Adam did not overcome this trial, however, for he ate from the Tree of Knowledge through his wife Eve, whom the serpent seduced.

How did the serpent manage to seduce Eve? It was by transgressing something minor before her, as our Sages cite the serpent as saying: "If you say that the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered you not to touch it, I will touch it and not die. You can also touch it and not die" (Avoth D'Rabbi Nathan 1:1). What did the serpent do at that point? It touched the Tree of Knowledge with its hands and feet, shaking the tree until its fruits fell to the ground. It then said to her, "If you say that the Holy One, blessed be He, forbid the eating of it, I will eat it and not die, and you can also eat it and not die." Eve replied, "All that Adam told me was a lie," and then she took the fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate it.

I believe that this is why the first paragraph of the Shema appears in Parsha Va'etchanan. In fact the term va'etchanan has the same numerical value as the words rosh yad ("head, hand"), telling us that a person is only protected from the evil inclination because he prays to Hashem to save him. Thus it is written, "Prayer is even more effective than good deeds, for none was greater in good deeds than Moshe our teacher, and yet he was answered only after prayer" (Berachot 32b). We also read about the question that the people of Alexandria put to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania: " 'What must a man do that he may become wise?' He replied, 'Let him engage much in study, and little in business.' They said, 'Did not many do so and it was of no avail to them?' Rather, let them pray for mercy from Him to Whom wisdom belongs, for it is said: 'For Hashem grants wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding [Mishlei 2:6]" (Niddah 70b).

CURRENT ISSUES

NO GREATER DAYS FOR ISRAEL THAN AV 15 AND YOM KIPPUR

Av 15 has been fixed as a day for rejoicing and celebration because of several important historical events that occurred over the course of the centuries, events that have had a lasting impact on all the generations. In fact our Sages have said, "In Israel there were no greater days of joy than Av 15 and Yom Kippur" (Mishnah, Taanith 4:8). The Mishnah also teaches in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, "On these days the daughters of Jerusalem used to go out in white garments, which they borrowed in order not to put to shame anyone who had none."

The Gemara asks why Yom Kippur is a day of joy. The answer is that it is a day of forgiveness, as well as the day when we received the second tablets. However what reason does Av 15 have for being a day of joy? The Sages provide us with several reasons, since numerous events occurred on Av 15 that brought joy to the Children of Israel in different eras.

Separating the Living from the Dead

One such reason is given by Rabbi Bar Bar Chana, who cites Rabbi Yochanan in saying: "It is the day on which the generation of the wilderness ceased dying" (Taanith 30b). Rabbi Levi said, "On the eve of every Tisha B'Av, Moshe used to send a herald throughout the camp to announce: 'Go out and dig graves.' They would then go out and dig graves in which they would sleep. On the following day, he sent out a herald to announce: 'Arise and separate the dead from the living.' They would then stand up and find themselves, in round figures, 15,000 short of 600,000. In the last of the 40 years, they did the same and found themselves in undiminished numerical strength. They said, 'It appears that we erred in our calculation,' so they acted similarly on the nights of the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th. When the moon was full, they said: 'It seems that the Holy One, blessed be He, has annulled that decree from us all.' Hence they proceeded to make [the 15th of Av] a holiday" (Eicha Rabba, Prologue 33).

Rabbi Yosef Haim of Baghdad discusses a question raised by the Gevurat Ari (Rabbi Aryeh Leib Gunzberg), namely how it was possible that for six days, Moshe and all Israel wondered if they had committed such a glaring error? He replies in his book Ben Yehoyada that Moshe and the elders of Israel certainly did not err and had no doubts about the issue. Although they knew the truth, Hashem wanted to throw them off in order for them to commit such a glaring error. As such, they would only know the truth on Av 15, thus establishing it as a festive day, a day of joy. For reasons known only by Hashem, Av 15 merited to be a day of joy, which is why several good things occurred on it. The Sages have enumerated them, for good things occur on a good day and bad things on a bad day.

The Tribes Could Intermarry

A second reason is given by Rav Yehudah in the name of Shemuel: "It is the day when permission was granted to the tribes to intermarry" (Taanith 30b). In fact during Moshe's time, a woman who received an inheritance from her father could only marry someone from the same tribe. In this way, the inheritance would not pass from one tribe to another. Thus it is written, "Every daughter who inherits an inheritance of the tribes of the Children of Israel shall become the wife of someone from a family of her father's tribe.... An inheritance shall not make rounds from a tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the Children of Israel shall cleave every man to his own inheritance" (Bamidbar 36:8-9). On Av 15, they received the right to marry someone from any tribe, for the Sages explain that the expression zeh hadavar ("this is the thing" - Bamidbar 36:6) applied only to devar zeh ("this thing") - only to this generation.

Absolved of the Oath

A third reason is given by Rabbi Yosef in the name of Rabbi Nachman: "It is the day when the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to reenter the congregation" (Taanith 30b). Starting from the time of the incident with the concubine at Gibeah, the Children of Israel excluded the tribe of Benjamin from the nation, not allowing them to marry women from other tribes. In fact they took an oath to uphold this exclusion. However when they saw that the tribe of Benjamin was diminishing in numbers, they looked for ways to absolve themselves of their oath, as it is written: "The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah, saying: 'None of us [mimenu] shall give his daughter as a wife to Benjamin'" (Judges 21:1). Now the term mimenu

was interpreted to refer specifically to themselves, not to their sons, meaning that the oath applied to their generation only. Hence they made Av 15 a day of joy, for on that day they found a way to absolve themselves of their oath.

Within Your Gates, O Jerusalem

Ulla gives a fourth reason: "It is the day when Hoshea the son of Elah removed the guards that Jeroboam the son of Nabat had placed on the roads" (Taanith 30b). When Jeroboam split the Jewish nation into two kingdoms, he placed guards along the roads in order to prevent people from going to pray in Jerusalem. In fact these guards forced people to worship calf idols that he had created, one at Dan and the other at Beth-El. Thus the eyes of many were turned to Jerusalem and the Temple, but Jeroboam prevented them from going there to worship Hashem and pay homage to the king of Judah, who reigned in Jerusalem. These guards remained on the roads leading to Jerusalem until the northern kingdom came to an end, at the time of King Hoshea the son of Elah. It was Av 15 when King Hoshea removed these guards and said, "Let them go to whichever shrine they desire," at which point the Children of Israel greatly rejoiced.

Who is Good and Who Does Good

A fifth reason is given by Rav Mattanah: "It is the day when permission was granted for those killed at Beitar to be buried" (Taanith 31a).

In the Gemara we read that Beitar was destroyed because of a chariot axle: "It was customary to plant a cedar tree whenever a boy was born, and a pine tree whenever a girl was born. When they married, the trees were cut down and a canopy made from the branches. One day the daughter of the emperor was passing by, when the axle of her chariot broke. They cut some branches from a cedar tree and brought it to her. The Jews thereupon fell upon them and beat them. They reported to the emperor that the Jews were rebelling, and he marched against them" (Gittin 57a). In fact Rabbi Yochanan said, "These are the 80,000 battle trumpets which assembled in the city of Beitar when it was taken. Men, women and children were slain in it until their blood ran into the great sea" (ibid). The Sages tell us that when Hadrian destroyed Beitar, "he engaged in widespread massacre and treated the dead with unparalleled cruelty. What did he do? He had a large vineyard that was 18 mil long and 18 mil wide. The slain were brought there and laid atop one another as a fence surrounding the property. Why did he do this? In order to enjoy the sight" (Yerushalmi, Taanith 4:5).

Some time later, a new ruler arose and allowed the dead to be buried. All the Jews who were there went to bury them, and that day was Av 15. As the Gemara states, "On the day when permission was given to bury those slain in Beitar, they ordained in Yavneh that [the blessing], 'Who is good and Who does good' should be recited. 'Who is good' because [the corpses] did not putrefy, and 'Who does good' because they were allowed to be buried" (Berachot 48b). This blessing applies when we drink very good wine. Why only on wine? In memory of the miracle that occurred in a vineyard.

The Strength of the Sun

A sixth reason is given by Rabba and Rabbi Yosef: "It is the day [of the year] when they stopped cutting trees for the altar" (Taanith 31a). This occurred at the time when Ezra and Nechemia left Babylon to build the Temple and the altar with this wood. They found the land deserted, for all the Arabs had been uprooted by their enemies. Providing wood for the altar was considered a great gift for the House of Hashem. Whoever merited this mitzvah brought an offering, which was called "the offering of wood." This offering was very important, and it was made amid great pomp and tremendous joy, comparable to the bringing of the first fruits. The last day of the year on which wood was cut for the altar was Av 15. In fact the strength of the sun begins to diminish starting on Av 15. After this day, they would no longer cut trees for the altar because the wood could not dry sufficiently, and wood with too much humidity would smoke. Hence the day on which the mitzvah was completed became a day of joy.

AT THE SOURCE

Speak No More

It is written, "Hashem said to me, 'It is too much for you! Speak no more to Me about this matter'" (Devarim 3:26).

The Vilna Gaon explains, according to the Zohar, that Moshe had a tradition that if he were to use the term na in prayer, his requests would be granted. This is precisely what happened when Moshe prayed for the healing of Miriam, as we read: "Na [Please], heal her, na [please]" (Bamidbar 12:13).

When Moshe resorted to prayer in order to enter Eretz Israel, saying, "Let me cross over, na [please], and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan" (Devarim 3:25), Hashem told him not to add another na. Hence we read, "It is too much for you! Speak no more to Me about this matter."

An Eternal Connection

It is written, "But you who cleave to Hashem your G-d, you are all alive today" (Devarim 4:4).

The holy Shelah describes a great principle in serving Hashem that we learn from this verse.

He states, "This verse contains the entire Torah and all the deeds, virtues, and conduct incumbent on man. Everything should be done with devotion for Hashem; everything should be for His sake. Even when dealing with our bodily needs, our devotion must not diminish. When we are busy with work, we should think: 'I am busy working, and by this work I hope that Hashem will enable me to perform a mitzvah. I earn a living for myself and my wife, and I support my children in order for them to live and serve Hashem. I will give money for tzedakah, for the study of Torah, etc.'

"Similarly, when we eat or sleep, we must have the intention of strengthening our bodies in order to study Torah and perform mitzvot. Thus during his entire life, a person will cleave to Hashem if he conducts himself in this way, thereby meriting an eternal connection to G-d."

A Marvelous Segula

It is written, "You have been shown in order to know that Hashem, He is G-d; there is none beside Him" (Devarim 4:35).

The Nefesh HaChaim describes a marvelous segula that rids a person of all kinds of harmful influences and desires, preventing them from controlling or affecting him: When a person decides that Hashem is G-d and there is none beside Him – that there is no other power in the world, and that all is filled with His unity alone – and when he completely eradicates all worldly influences and desires from his heart, without paying any attention to them, and he subjugates and attaches the purity of his thoughts to G-d alone, Hashem will then automatically eradicate all harmful influences and desires of this world for him, which will be unable to harm him in any way.

The Essential Thing

It is written, "Hear, O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One" (Devarim 6:4).

Rabbi Israel Salanter would say, "Many people have the intention, at the time of reciting Shema in the morning and at night, to crown the Holy One, blessed be He, as King over the seven Heavens and four cardinal directions, according to the din. However the essential thing, the most important intention that one should have, is something they forget: To crown the Holy One, blessed be He, as King over themselves."

Love in Return

It is written, "You shall love Hashem your G-d" (Devarim 6:5).

The question is asked: How can a person actually be commanded to love?

In Milin Chadetin, the gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger Zatzal answers this question by noting that before we read the passage on Shema, we complete the blessing Ahavat Olam by saying: "Who chooses His people Israel with love."

Now since the Holy One, blessed be He, loves us, it is obvious that we should love Him too!

Head and Hand

It is written, "You shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for tatarot between your eyes" (Devarim 6:8).

The gaon Rabbi Yehudah Tsadka explains this passage as follows: The tefillin of the hand alludes to working men, those who use their hands to earn a living. The tefillin of the head alludes to Torah scholars, men who study Torah and deal primarily with intellectual matters.

Hence the Halachah rules that it is forbidden to interrupt the placing of the tefillin on the hand and the head. Therein lies a great and important allusion to the fact that we must respect the bond between the two, for there should be no separation between them: Torah scholars must enable working men to benefit from their Torah study, and working men must financially support Torah scholars through the work of their hands, just as Zebulun and Issachar did.

GUARD YOUR TONGUE

Concealed Lashon Harah

The prohibition against speaking Lashon Harah applies even if the speaker does not specifically name the person he is talking about, given that the listener can determine his identity by what is said. This is considered to be Lashon Harah. Furthermore, even if a statement does not contain anything derogatory, but may harm or humiliate the subject – and that is the objective of the speaker – it too is considered Lashon Harah. In fact the Sages call it "concealed Lashon Harah."

– Chafetz Chaim

IN THE LIGHT OF THE PARSHA FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE TSADDIK RABBI DAVID PINTO SHLITA

Not For Himself

It is written, "I implored Hashem at that time, saying..." (Devarim 3:23). Why "at that time"? The Baal HaTurim notes that the term va'etchanan ("I implored") has the same numerical value as the word shira ("song").

This seems very odd, for what is a shira doing here? Moshe greatly suffered on account of not being allowed into Eretz Israel, something for which he had uttered more than 500 prayers. How can we say that he was happy, and was indeed singing, because he could not enter Eretz Israel?

We may answer this according to an explanation given by my son, Rabbi Raphael Pinto, namely that every man enjoys a time of favor, a time when Hashem listens to his prayer.

Moshe's greatest characteristic was his humility. He requested nothing for himself during his entire lifetime, and everything he requested of Hashem was solely for the needs of the Jewish people.

Here too, he requested nothing for himself, but only for Israel. He said, "Sovereign of the universe, remember in their favor the time when the sea split, when You revealed Yourself to them and they sang a shira before You: 'This is my G-d, and I will adorn Him' [Shemot 15:2]. I implore You, allow them to enter Eretz Israel! Do not let them continue to wander in the desert, as they have been doing up to now!" Moshe did not pray for himself at that time of favor, but rather for the Jewish people.

YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER - RABBI YEHUDAH PINTO

Taking place this week (Av 16th) is the Hilloula of the holy tzaddik Rabbi Yehudah Pinto, also known as Rabbi Hadan, who passed away on Av 16, 5641. Inscribed on his gravestone are the words, "He worked for the community, was a father to orphans and widows." Could a person receive a greater compliment than to be compared to his Creator? The Sages say, "Just as He is gracious and compassionate, so should you be gracious and compassionate" (Shabbat 133b). Another of his virtues is inscribed on his gravestone: Humility. Can there be a greater virtue than to be the tzaddik, the son of a tzaddik, and the grandson of a tzaddik, and yet to remain humble and self-effacing before all men?

The holy tzaddik Rabbi Yehudah Pinto, the son of the tzaddik Rabbi Haim Pinto Hagadol, was an exceptional man. He was known for doing a tremendous amount of tzeddakah, as the great Torah figures of the generation testified. He loved conferring merit to the community, and he was diligent in the practice of mitzvot. It is therefore obvious that he obtained everything through his service of Hashem, which was extraordinary. The teaching of the Tanna, "Be as bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven" (Pirkei Avoth 5:20) was fulfilled in him. After the passing of his father Rabbi Haim Pinto, he began to fulfill his role. Many of his father's character traits were rooted in him. In fact he was known for obtaining miracles, and many people came to him for a blessing.

One mitzvah that he greatly loved was to give tzeddakah. He resembled his father in this way, being very careful not to go to bed if there was any money remaining in his pocket. In that case, he would hurry to give it to the poor. Since he knew poor Jewish families, Rabbi Yehudah took it upon himself to provide them with numerous household needs. When a boy from a poor family was about to have his Bar Mitzvah, Rabbi Yehudah would provide him with new clothes, a tallit, and tefillin in order to rejoice on the day in which he comes under the yoke of the Torah and mitzvot. He suffered in their sufferings and rejoiced in their joys, as if they were truly his sons.

It is also said that Rabbi Haim Pinto would appear to his son Rabbi Yehudah in dreams, showing him various people who had made a vow to give money to tzeddakah, or those who had been struck by grave misfortunes. Rabbi Yehudah would then save them, helping them with all their needs.

May What is Yours Remain Yours

A wealthy man from Mogador was returning home from a trip to London, bringing boatloads of merchandise with him. While on route, a great storm suddenly arose, putting all their lives in danger, and the man's entire fortune was about to be lost. The man did as his forefathers had done before him, praying to be saved by the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Haim Pinto. He also made a vow to give his entire fortune to Rabbi Yehudah, including the very clothes that he was wearing, if he were to be saved. Now it is known that whoever finds himself in trouble and makes a vow to give to the charity fund of the tzaddik Rabbi Haim Pinto will certainly be saved. In fact Hashem heard the man's prayer, and he safely made it to the Moroccan coast.

When the man returned home, he regretted the vow he had made, and he wanted to absolve himself from it. In any case, he decided not to give Rabbi Yehudah all his fortune, as he had vowed to do, but only a small amount.

While he was still thinking about it, messengers from Rabbi Yehudah suddenly came to his home, telling him that the Rav wanted to see him right away. The man immediately went to see the Rav, who said to him: "Your entire fortune, all the merchandise that your boats were carrying, belongs to me – including the clothes that you are wearing!"

The man was stunned to hear these words, and he asked: "How do you know this? I told nobody what happened, nor did I ever mention the vow I made!" Rabbi Yehudah explained that his father had appeared to him in a dream and told him everything. Rabbi Yehudah then surprised the man by saying, "So that your vow is not broken, I hereby give you back everything as a gift. May what is yours remain yours." May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed, and may his merit protect us all. Amen and Amen!

A TRUE STORY

"If I Were to Accept Gifts" – The Wisdom of Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb

It is written, "You shall safeguard and perform them, for it is your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the peoples, who shall hear all these decrees and who shall say, 'Surely a wise and discerning people is this great nation'" (Devarim 4:6).

The gaon Rabbi Avraham Faladji Zatzal (the son of Rabbi Haim Faladji Zatzal) recounts that as the gaon Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb sat on the Beit Din and listened to arguments from the litigants, he would also answer questions that had been brought to him in court. He did the same while writing down the verdicts as well, answering questions addressed to him as he was writing.

Some people objected to this, asking how a person could do both things at the same time. Yet when they saw his verdicts, along with the responses on diverse issues that he issued at the same time, they realized that he was perfectly capable of doing both. His sharp mind and vast knowledge were demonstrated in the responses that he gave, and the halachic decisions that he rendered at exactly the same time were clear and fitting.

One of the great men of his generation applied the following verse to him: "The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice" (Tehillim 37:30). When such a man issues rulings in matters of justice, he merits the ability to respond to halachic questions in a way that befits the law.

Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb was great not just in the eyes of his Jewish community, but also in the eyes of non-Jews. The following story affirms this more than one hundred witnesses ever could:

Two Arab neighbors owned plots of land that bordered one another, separated only by a row of fruit trees. One day, one of these men left town in order to deal with a business matter, and he was away for several weeks. When he returned, he discovered to his great dismay that the fruit trees had been uprooted and his neighbor had appropriated a large part of his land. When he asked his neighbor what was happening, he feigned ignorance. In fact he said that he knew nothing of any uprooted trees, and as for the land in question, he said that it had always belonged to him!

A tremendous conflict erupted between the two men, until finally they presented their grievances to a judge. The judge himself, not knowing how to rule in the case, referred it to a higher court, which itself was unable to reach a verdict. The case eventually made its way to the king, but he too was perplexed. He decided that only the great Jewish sage, Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb, could resolve such a complicated issue.

The king summoned the gaon Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb and explained the situation to him. The Rav asked the neighbor who had been wronged if he owned a mule.

He said that he did, but could not understand what it had to do with his case.

Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb took the mule and went into the field along with the Arab, and there he released the mule. As we know, a mule will not wander into a field that it does not recognize and which does not belong to its master. In fact the mule began to run in the field until a certain point, and there it stopped. Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb then ordered the king's servants to begin digging there, and to the shame of the accused, they found the roots of the fruit trees that had served as a border before having been deliberately cut down.

The first Arab, who was given back the land that had been stolen from him, was very impressed with Rabbi Yitzhak Taieb. On that same day, he went to see the Rav and brought him a very beautiful gift.

Rav Yitzhak Taieb said to him, "If I were to accept gifts from people, I would be unable to render true justice."