

The Path To Follow

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Ki Tisa

433

Under the Direction of Rabbi David H. Pinto Shlita
www.hevratpinto.org | hevratpinto@aol.com

Editor-in-Chief: Hanania Soussan

32 rue du Plateau 75019 Paris, France • Tel: +331 48 03 53 89 • Fax: +331 42 06 00 33

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Rabbi David Pinto Shlita

Great is the Power of Deeds of Kindness

On the verse, "He gave to Moshe" (*Shemot* 31:18), the Sages teach: "Rabbi Abahu said, 'All the 40 days that Moshe was on high, he kept on forgetting the Torah that he learned. He then said: "Sovereign of the universe, I have spent 40 days, and yet I know nothing." What did G-d do? At the end of the 40 days, He gave him the Torah as a gift'" (*Shemot Rabba* 41:6).

The Sages have also said that on the seventh day after the giving of the Ten Commandments, Moshe ascended the mountain. On Tammuz 17 he descended and broke the first Tablets, and on Tammuz 18 he went back up and pleaded for mercy on Israel. At that point the Holy One, blessed be He, forgave Israel and told Moshe to carve out the second Tablets and to ascend the mountain. He descended on Av 28, carved out the second Tablets, and ascended again on Av 29. The Torah was then taught to him a second time, as it is written: "I remained on the mountain as on the first days – 40 days and 40 nights" (*Devarim* 10:10). Moshe descended on Tishri 10, which was Yom Kippur, and told the Children of Israel that G-d had forgiven them, as it is written: "You shall forgive our iniquity and sin, and make us Your heritage" (*Shemot* 34:9). Hence this day became a law and a memorial for all the generations, as it is written: "This shall be to you an eternal decree" (*Vayikra* 16:34).

Let us think about this: Since Moshe knew the entire Torah and it was given to him as a gift, why did he need to stay on the mountain for 40 more days to receive the second Tablets? He already knew the entire Torah! If we say that Moshe had to remain in order to appease the Creator, did Moshe only know how to appease the Creator by fasting on the mountain?

We note that when the Children of Israel made the golden calf, the Holy One, blessed be He, told Moshe: "Go, descend" (*Shemot* 32:7). Here the Sages explain: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: 'Moshe, descend from your greatness. Have I given you greatness other than for the sake of Israel? Now that Israel has sinned, what do you need with greatness?'" (*Berachot* 32a). The Sages also say that Moshe was judged by the Celestial Court at that point (*Tanchuma, Ki Tisa* 22). In other words, before the end of the 40 days, he was judged by Hashem, Who made him descend from his greatness. Moshe's learning was then interrupted, and he forgot what he had learned. He therefore had to return to the mountain for another 40 days and 40 nights to relearn what he had forgotten.

What did Moshe Rabbeinu do during those 40 days and nights? He spent them in prayer, asking for the Children of Israel to be shown mercy. During that time, his learning returned to him, and he remembered everything that he had studied during the first 40 days and nights. Since he had completely devoted himself to the Children of Israel and prayed for them as he studied, he merited for the skin of his face to shine. Moshe's first ascent – when he learned Torah from the mouth of G-d by repeating it, and he possessed only Torah – was not the same as the second time he ascended, when he reviewed his learning while praying for the Holy One, blessed be He, not to destroy Israel. At that point Moshe was engaged in both the service of Hashem and doing good for others, since he devoted his life to his people.

The World Stands on Account of Moshe Rabbeinu

There is more. The Mishnah teaches us, "The world stands on three things: On Torah, the service [of G-d], and deeds of kindness" (*Pirkei Avoth* 1:2). How do we

learn this from Moshe? When he stood upon the mountain, Moshe practiced these three things: He studied Torah, prayed for his people, and concerned himself only with saving the Jewish people so they would not be destroyed by Hashem's wrath. Can there be a greater deed of kindness than to risk your life to save your people? This is the point that the Sages made on the verse, "Moshe implored [vayecheil] Hashem his G-d" (*Shemot* 32:11), namely: "Moshe stood in prayer before the Holy One, blessed be He, until he wearied Him [chala]" (*Berachot* 32a). The Sages also say that Moshe was ready to die for them. From here Shimon HaTzaddik learned about the three pillars upon which the world stands, for it was only because of Moshe Rabbeinu that Hashem did not destroy His people.

Where do we learn that the world exists by the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu? It is from the Sages' teaching (*Mechilta, Beshalach, Parsha HaShira*) that Moshe is comparable to all Israel put together, and that the world was only created for the sake of Israel (*Vayikra Rabba* 36:4). When the Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to destroy Israel, upon what would the world have stood? Upon Moshe Rabbeinu. Therefore the entire world may stand by the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu, who would usually practice these three things: Learning Torah, serving G-d, and performing deeds of kindness.

When Moshe ascended the second time, he therefore practiced these three things. Just how powerful are deeds of kindness! As long as Moshe had not prayed for the Jewish people, although he had learned a great deal of Torah from Hashem when he ascended the first time, the skin of his face still did not shine. Yet as soon as he began to pray, immediately the skin of his face began shining.

The Sages have said that there is a little of Moshe in every generation and in each tzaddik (*Tikkunei Zohar* 114a). Every tzaddik who possesses these three things, we know that the world rests upon him and his memory. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, "I am able to exempt the whole world from judgment from the day that I was born until now" (*Sukkah* 45b). This corresponds to what kabbalists have explained on the verse, "You ascended on high, you have taken shevi [captives]" (*Tehillim* 68:19). The term shevi is formed by the initial of Shimon bar Yochai, meaning that when Moshe ascended on high, he "captured" the souls of the tzaddikim in every generation. Our Sages have also said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, showed Moshe every generation and its judges...every generation and its leaders" (*Vayikra Rabba* 26:7), and He gave them the power to sustain the world by their merit alone.

Because Moshe practiced deeds of kindness for 40 days and 40 nights, he merited many things. The skin of his face began to shine, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: "I have forgiven according to your word" (*Bamidbar* 14:20), and he obtained a day of forgiveness for all the generations. Not only that, but the second Tablets contained what the first Tablets did not, as the Sages have said: "[Moshe] began to feel remorseful for having broken the Tablets, but G-d reassured him, saying: 'Do not grieve about the first Tablets. They only contained the Ten Commandments, but in the two Tablets that I am now about to give you, there will also be Halachah, Midrashim, and Aggadot. ... Not only that, but you are now being told that I will forgive your sin'" (*Shemot Rabba* 46:1).

He Will Certainly be Healed

It is written, “For six days work may be done, but the seventh day is a day of complete rest. It is sacred to Hashem. Whoever does work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death” (*Shemot* 31:15).

The book *Od Yosef Chai* (containing a biography of the *tzaddik* Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *Zatzal*, the Rav of Jerusalem) recounts how Rabbi Yosef Chaim’s wife became seriously ill one Friday night. The Rav immediately ran to see Dr. Schwartz, who lived near the Batei Machassei, so he could examine his wife and treat her.

When Dr. Schwartz opened the door of his home, Rabbi Yosef Chaim saw him holding a fuel canister in his hand. It greatly hurt the Rav to see that the doctor was needlessly transgressing Shabbat, but he restrained himself and asked the doctor to come over and examine his sick wife.

At the end of the doctor’s visit, the Rav accompanied him back home.

As they were walking down the small roads of the old city, Rabbi Yosef Chaim suddenly addressed a question to the doctor: “Perhaps you can tell me what is the physical ratio of the head to the entire body?”

The doctor could not understand what this strange question had to do with what they were talking about, but out of respect he answered the Rav.

“Absolutely. The head is one seventh of the body.”

“Quite correct,” Rabbi Yosef Chaim said. He then continued: “One day, all the parts of the body came before the head and said to it: ‘Look at how unfair this is: We’re the ones doing all the exhausting work – the hands labor, the feet walk, and the other body parts also participate in doing all the work in the house and the fields – but when it comes time to eat, you’re the one opening your mouth and filling yourself with delicacies! When we’re celebrating with friends, it’s the mouth that starts speaking, while we – the other parts of the body – remain silent and nobody appreciates or respects us.’”

“What did the head reply?”

“It’s true that I receive everything first. However I deserve it, and for good reason: I’m the one giving the entire body instructions on what to do and when to do it. If I didn’t guide everyone, you would all be in a corner having no use. That’s why it’s fair that I be the first to enjoy the pleasures of man.’”

“Alright,” replied Dr. Schwartz. “That’s a very good answer. The head is truly headstrong!”

Rabbi Yosef Chaim continued his story:

“The connection between the head and the body is precisely the same as the one established by the Holy One, blessed be He, between the week and Shabbat, which is at the head of the week. Without this day of rest, man would become completely enslaved to the material desires within him, and he would resemble the animals around him. That is why we must appreciate the sanctity of Shabbat and meticulously observe it, for it protects us during all the days of the week.”

These words, which emerged from the pure and fatherly heart of Rabbi Yosef Chaim, and which had also been very well presented, attained their objective. “Rabbi, you’re right,” said Dr. Schwartz. “From now on, I’ll take it upon myself to observe Shabbat.”

Improving Family Bonds and Middot

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein *Shlita* recounted the following story in

his book *Tuvcha Yabiu*: “One day, I was present when a sick Jew addressed a great Rebbe and asked for a blessing to be healed. The Rebbe had been immersed in thought, but then suddenly returned to the present and told this Jew: ‘You want to be healed of your illness and free of your troubles? Fulfill the verse, “Only for his lost time [*shivto*] shall he pay” [*Shemot* 21:19] – give your Shabbat to G-d, fulfill it to perfection, adhering to all its details and fences, and you will merit the second part of the verse: “and he shall certainly be healed.”’

“In the years that followed, I continued to see this Jew, and I can testify to two things: Once he emerged from the Rebbe’s house, he decided to make his Shabbat a day of holiness and purity, and he truly changed his entire home in this spirit. He was also cured of his illness.”

Hence this is a marvelous *segula* to transform us into another person. It sanctifies and purifies us, bringing us closer to our Creator in a very special way. In reality, when a Jew sanctifies Shabbat, the more he “gives,” the more he “receives” abundant peace of mind and serenity, and a great degree of true happiness floods his heart. What more can a person want?

Shabbat is a time when we can have the greatest influence on our children. When the family gathers around the Shabbat table, everyone is united into a single whole. This allows parents to show children the good relationships that exist among them, as well as the work required to perfect *middot* and character traits that express themselves in their parents’ ordinary conversations, between father and mother.

Let us strive to sanctify the Shabbat table and not to have any mundane conversations, nor to profane Shabbat with newspapers or other worthless things. On the sanctified Shabbat table, let us only express words of faith and confidence in G-d, the fear of Heaven and good *middot*, which we can then instill into the hearts of our children. Next to the fine meals prepared by the lady of the house, let us “feed” the members of our family with sweet and pleasant words of Torah. The steps that a Jew must take in order to “give” his Shabbat to the Creator of the universe are not so complicated. With a little bit of initiative and goodwill – with a little sanctification and purification – we can completely transform the entire atmosphere in our homes and reach heights that have been a source of strength for Jews in every generation.

Let us use each moment for a true rest, one that comes with the fear of Heaven, a “rest that You desire.” Let us completely rest from profane work and leave our tarnished clothes behind in order to don a coat of royalty.

Guard Your Tongue!

Falling into Gehinnom

Know that the prohibition against speaking *Lashon Harah* applies even in regards to an ignoramus, for he too is considered part of the nation of G-d’s emissaries who were taken out of Egypt. All the more so is it forbidden to speak *Lashon Harah* of a *talmid chacham*, in which case the speaker’s violation is much worse. The Sages tell us, “Anyone who speaks about the strayings of a *talmid chacham* falls into Gehinnom.” Furthermore, by speaking *Lashon Harah* one might violate the prohibition against shaming a *talmid chacham*, the punishment for which is *karet* [excision].

Together or Apart?

It is written, "For this man Moshe, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what became of him" (*Shemot* 32:1).

In *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer*, we find that the Children of Israel remained in Egypt for 210 years. We know the question that arises from this: Had it not been decreed that they would remain in Egypt for 400 years? One explanation is that the nights completed the count of the years, for the Children of Israel also worked at night. These nights were therefore counted separately.

We know why the Children of Israel made the golden calf: They had mistaken the time that Moshe would be in Heaven, for Moshe had told them: 'I will return after 40 days,' and they believed that the day he ascended was included in the count. However he had said 40 complete days – days and nights.

As a result, explains Rav Bassan *Zatzal*, the Children of Israel reasoned as follows: "If the nights are counted separately, and if it was for this reason that we left Egypt before the set time, then 'we do not know what became of him,' for he should have returned after 40 days because days and nights are counted separately."

Hence they thought, "If Moshe considered days and nights together, why did he bring us out of Egypt before the set time?"

What Moshe Knew

It is written, "He saw the calf and dancing" (*Shemot* 32:19).

We need to examine the way in which the verse describes things: Why does it use the definite article "the" for the calf, but not for the dancing?

The book *Shira Chadasha* explains this by saying that when Moshe was upon the mountain, the Holy One, blessed be He, only told him about the calf: "They have made themselves a molten calf, prostrated themselves to it and sacrificed to it, and they have said: 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt'" (*Shemot* 32:8).

However the Holy One, blessed be He, did not tell Moshe that there was rejoicing and dancing around the calf.

In reality, says Sforno, Moshe did not even think of breaking the Tablets before having seen the dancing, which clearly indicated that they were deeply immersed in sin. When Moshe saw that, he decided to break the Tablets.

Hence the verse means: "He saw the calf" – the calf that Moshe knew about, since the Holy One, blessed be He, had told him about it on Mount Sinai; "and dancing" – which occurred around the calf, and which Moshe did not know about.

Where Shame Has No Place

It is written, "When Moshe would come before Hashem to speak with Him, he would remove the mask until he came out" (*Shemot* 34:34).

When Moshe's face shined with rays of glory, everyone would look at him. Because of his modesty and humility, however, Moshe covered his face with a mask, for the timid feel uncomfortable when people look at them.

Nevertheless, notes the author of *Kli Yakar*, all this was only when Moshe walked in the camp of Israel. When he came before Hashem, when he entered to learn Torah, he removed this mask because shame has no place at that time, for "the timid cannot learn" (*Pirkei Avot* 2:5). According to this explanation, where shame has no place, Moshe had to remove the mask before Him.

Ten Thousand Talents

It is written, "Everyone who passes through the census, from 20 years of age and up, shall give the portion of Hashem" (*Shemot* 30:14).

The Gemara teaches in the name of Resh Lakish, "It was well-known beforehand to Him, at Whose word the world came into being, that Haman would pay *shekalim* one day for the destruction of Israel. He therefore gave precedence to their *shekalim* before his" (*Megillah* 13b).

Our teachers the *Ba'alei HaTosafot* note the connection between the *mitzvah* to

give the half-shekel and the *shekalim* of Haman:

"I have heard that 10,000 talents of silver are equivalent to a half-shekel for each of the Children of Israel, who numbered 600,000 when they left Egypt, and he said that he would give to Achashverosh the total price of their redemption."

The calculation is correct, and it is more precisely explained in the book *Beit Chadash*:

Most people live to the age of 70. The obligation to give a half-shekel only begins from the age of 20. Hence a Jew gives the half-shekel 50 times during his life, for a total of 25 *shekalim*. This represents a *maneh* (each shekel is worth 4 *dinarim*), and 1 talent of silver is worth 60 *manim*.

Thus each group of 60 men gave a total of 1 talent of silver during their lifetime. Those who left Egypt were 10,000 more numerous than this (since they numbered 600,000). The amount that they gave during their lifetime was thus 10,000 talents, which came before the 10,000 talents of Haman.

In the Light of the Parsha

Hashem Sent the Cure Before the Illness

In the Midrash our Sages say, "The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: 'Number the Children of Israel.' He replied, 'It is written, "Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth" [*Bereshith* 28:14], and "I will make your offspring like the sand of the sea" [ibid. 32:13], yet now You tell me this?' He said to him, 'If you want to know their number, take the first letters of the tribes and calculate their value. It comes to 597,000, and the 3,000 who remain are those who died because of the golden calf, as it is written: "The Levites did as Moshe said, and about 3,000 men of the people fell on that day" [*Shemot* 32:28].' The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore told Moshe to count how many were missing. Rabbi Menachem said in the name of Rabbi Bibi: This is like a king who had numerous flocks, but wolves came and attacked them. The king said to the shepherd, 'Count how many are missing among the flock.' Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe: 'Count how many are missing among the Children of Israel' " (*Tanchuma, Ki Tisa* 9).

Hence we see that the *shekalim* only served to atone for the sin of the golden calf, as it is written: "You shall take atonement money" (*Shemot* 30:16). In that case, it is difficult to understand why the Torah placed the passage concerning the *shekalim* before the passage on the golden calf. Even if "there is no chronological order to the Torah" (*Pesachim* 6b), there must be some reason why one passage comes before another. In accordance with the Gemara, we may say that "the Israelites made the calf only in order to place a good argument in the mouth of penitents" (*Avodah Zarah* 4b). They did not deserve to do such a thing, but accusers still had reason to say: "The Children of Israel made a molten calf, and they must be wiped out." Since G-d knew that the Children of Israel would make a calf, in order to give *ba'alei teshuvah* a reason to repent, He sent the cure before the illness, as He normally does. He placed the passage regarding the atonement money before the passage on the calf, so that when accusers present themselves before Him to awaken strict justice against the Children of Israel, He could say: It was revealed before Me that the Children of Israel would make a calf, which they did only to give a reason for *ba'alei teshuvah* to repent.

G-d did not move before having shown them the *mitzvah* of the half-shekel and the donation to the Sanctuary, which was before Him already long earlier, to atone for the sin of the golden calf. When accusers realized that these *mitzvot* already existed, they yielded and no longer knew how to answer Him. When the mouth of these accusers was closed, immediately the mouth of the defender opened. Thus Moshe Rabbeinu began to pray, evoking the merit of the Patriarchs in order to appease Hashem.

Taking place next week (Adar 23) is the Hilloula of a holy Jew, the great *gaon* and kabbalist Rabbi Yehoshياهو Pinto (may his merit protect us), a man known throughout the Diaspora by the merit of his great work *Meor Einayim*, a commentary on *Ein Yaakov* (a compilation of Talmudic Aggadot). He wrote this book after the death of his son, Rabbi Yosef *Zatzal*, in 5376 to console himself over his passing. (In this way, says our teacher the *gaon* and *tzaddik* Rabbi David Hanania Pinto *Shlita*, the Rav demonstrated how his love for Hashem was greater than his love for his own son. Although he loved his son, he invested everything he had in the study of Torah.)

The *tzaddik* Rabbi Yehoshياهو, may his merit protect us, did everything he could to raise the honor of those who studied Torah in the eyes of the vast public, while at the same time seeing to their material needs. Many Jews in his generation fulfilled the words of the Sages and were content with living on a bare minimum. Rabbi Yehoshياهو took great care to find generous donors to support the families of *talmidei chachamim*, entering with them into the agreement of "Issachar and Zebulun."

It is interesting to note that everyone who studied Torah and was content with very little, devoting their entire lives to the service of G-d, had sons who became great in Torah and enlightened all Israel, as we shall see in the following stories:

The *gaon* Rabbi Yechiel Michal Heller HaCohen *Zatzal*, a descendant of Tosafot Yom Tov, arranged for the engagement of his son, Rabbi Yosef (who possessed tremendous intelligence), to the daughter of a poor and honorable family who lived in the area. At the end of the engagement, worries over the future began to grow. How was the young couple going to live? They didn't have a cent!

Tremendously worried, the parents of both families went to seek the advice of Rabbi Chaim of Sanz *Zatzal*, one of the great *talmidei chachamim* of the time. They recounted that they were very happy with the *shidduch*, but that the question of knowing how they would live was worrying them greatly.

Rabbi Chaim, the greatest sage of Brody, advised them not to dissolve the *shidduch*, and he found a solution to their financial problem: After their wedding, the husband should continue eating at his parents, and the wife should continue eating at her parents.

Both sides accepted this idea and began writing the *Tenaim*.

Nobody regretted the *shidduch*. Certainly not the thousands of people who each day study the famous books written by the children of this couple, *talmidei chachamim* who authored *Ketzot HaChoshen*, *Avnei Miluim*, *Shav Shemateta*, *Terumat HaKeri*, and *Kountrass HaSefekot*.

In the introduction to *Shav Shemateta*, written by the most famous of their sons, the *gaon* Rabbi Aryeh Leib *Zatzal* (who also wrote *Ketzot HaChoshen*), in the edition that was published in his lifetime, we find an account from a Jew who personally knew "the Ketzot" and his brother the *gaon* Rabbi Yehudah HaCohen (author of *Kountrass HaSefekot*). It describes how they grew up in the home of their father, the *gaon* Rabbi Yosef HaCohen, who lived in the Polish town of Skalia. Here is what he said:

"The author [of *Ketzot HaChoshen*] was a native of Skalia, Poland. He had a brother, the *gaon* Rabbi Yehudah *Zatzal*, the author of *Kountrass HaSefekot*. They were the sons of the *gaon* Rabbi Yosef HaCohen *Zatzal*, who was extremely poor. They had almost nothing with which to clothe their children in the winter. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the father from sending them to Talmud Torah every day.

"A very old man who knew them well told me that one time, their clothes had to be washed. Since they had no other clothes to wear in their place, the mother hid them near the stove, so that nobody would see them until their clothes were dry and they could be dressed.

"When their teacher saw that they had not come to learn, he went to see their father to ask about them, for he greatly loved these wonderful children. The father, who did not realize that they were at home, hidden near the stove, criticized his wife: 'Why didn't you send the children to study?' She replied that they were waiting for their clothes to dry.

"The father got upset and said, 'It's not right that they should lose even a single hour of Torah study!' He immediately took his own shirt and gave it to both of them together, since it was so large, and he brought them to school like this! We can see what this merit produced: They possessed the crown of the Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of a good name, which is even more valuable!"

Poverty followed the author of *Ketzot HaChoshen*, not only during his youth in his father's home, but also when he was married and served as the Rav of Rosentov, where he lived in misery.

He had no table in his home, only a piece of wood that was placed over some barrels, and which served as a table. During the wintertime, he had no way to heat his home, which was glacially cold. In fact it was so cold that he was forced to stay in bed under the covers all day long. In *Ketzot HaChodesh*, he writes that the cold was so intense that the ink would freeze in the inkpot, which he was forced to keep under his covers so he could use it.

It was in this way that the author of *Ketzot HaChoshen* learned Torah and wrote his commentaries, through monumental effort. It is not without reason that he reached the heights that he did!

In the Depths of Torah

The *gaon* Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky *Zatzal* once found himself at the Marienbad springs around the year 5694. He booked a room at a hotel, where he found the Gerer Rebbe, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai *Zatzal*, whose room was next to his. This is the account that he gives:

At night, when it was time to go to bed, he could hear the voice of Rabbi Avraham Mordechai from the other side of the wall as he recited *Shema* before going to sleep. Rabbi Yosef Tzvi then began to prepare for bed as well. Not long afterwards, however, before he could actually fall asleep, he heard the sound of the Rebbe washing his hands. In fact he heard the Rebbe reciting the blessing for the Torah with enthusiasm, and he had already started learning with fervor.

"I was very surprised," explained Rabbi Yosef Tzvi to his listeners, "for the Gerer Rebbe and I had retired to our rooms for the night at the same time. Yet even before I had time to sleep, the Rebbe had slept, gotten up, washed his hands, recited the blessing on the Torah, and was now immersed in Torah learning. In fact he was already deep into the following day, whereas I was still in yesterday."

He Continued Speaking Words of Torah

The *gaon* Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *Zatzal*, the Rosh Yeshiva of Kol Torah, suffered from trigeminal neuralgia for six years. This condition, which affects the trigeminal nerves in the face, causes intense episodes of facial pain when the nerves are inflamed. It is known as "the suicide disease," because the pain it causes is so intense that it leads some people to attempt suicide. During these six years, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman lived under terrible emotional stress, fearful of having an episode of excruciating pain. He knew that if it lasted for more than 30 seconds, he would not be able to endure it.

Despite this painful condition, he did not stop learning Torah for an instant, as his student the *gaon* Rabbi Yehudah Ades *Shlita* recounts:

"In 5723, I went to see my Rav, the *gaon* Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *Zatzal*, and I found him immersed in the study of the Gemara. I did not have the nerve to disturb him, and so I stood there waiting for him. He noticed my presence as he was studying, and when he raised his head to look at me, he got up with such facial pain that a piercing cry escaped his lips. I continued to stand there waiting, and when the intensity of his pain diminished, he spoke to me about the terrible suffering he endured. Among other things, he said that even if his mouth were to be stabbed by ten knives, it would not be intense enough to describe his pain. He added, 'People ask me why I decided to undergo such a difficult and dangerous facial operation. I told them that experiencing such pain can drive a person mad, and is this in itself not dangerous?' Rabbi Shlomo Zalman took this decision concerning his health, and then he immediately began to speak about Torah."

Rav Ades added that students of the Kol Torah yeshiva at the time told him that sometimes, in the middle of a class, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman would jump up as if a serpent had bitten him. He would firmly clench his hands in order to overcome his pain, and then continue speaking words of Torah.