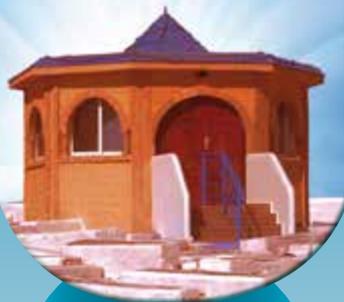


# Shoftim

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## 816



Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"l



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

## The Heart is Drawn After Deeds

**"So that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren"** (Devarim 17:20)

The Torah requires us to accord great honor to a Jewish king; the entire nation is obligated to obey his instruction and fulfil his commands. Even if the king is prepared to forego his honor, his honor is not overlooked. Despite all the honor that the king merits, nevertheless the Torah details several commandments specific to a king, "so that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren". He is forbidden to act with arrogance and is obligated to steer clear of any feelings of pride, rather he must behave with humility and self-effacement. Since this behavior must not be simply an external show of modesty, he must remove any feelings of superiority from deep within his heart and this is why the Torah stresses, "so that his heart does not become haughty". His heart too must be free of pride.

On the surface, this seems to be a difficult mitzvah to fulfill. On the one hand, the Torah requires that a king be accorded great respect and must be held in high esteem. On the other hand, the king himself is obligated to behave with humility. How can we demand of a king not to feel haughty or entertain any feelings of pride? How is he able to douse the flames of pride which are ignited inside his heart due to the great honor that he is awarded by the nation?

With *siyata dishmaya*, I would like to suggest the following explanation: Indeed, it is not an easy task for a king to honestly feel humility and self-effacement, but Chazal tell us (Minchat Chinuch mitzvah 16), that external deeds influence our internal feelings, with the heart being drawn after our deeds. Therefore, to refine his middot and diminish any feelings of pride, he must first and foremost conduct himself, in an external manner, with humility and lowliness. He is obligated to accustom himself not to walk in an arrogant manner, with his head held high, and if he conducts himself in this way then soon this habit will become nature, until he eventually acquires the trait of humility also deep within himself, just as he is commanded, "so that his heart does not become haughty", which refers to his internal feelings.

Just as it is natural for a person to be influenced by his surroundings, as the Rambam writes (Hilchot De'ot 66 halacha 1): "It is natural for a person's thoughts and deeds to be influenced by his friends", so too the heart is always drawn after external deeds. If a person conducts himself with a display of pride and arrogance, his heart too will inevitably be drawn after this behavior and this will make it hard for him to achieve internal feelings of humility. However, if he chooses

to behave with external acts that express lowliness, this modesty will implant itself in his heart and have an influence on his internal essence and in this way it will be easier for him to fulfil the Torah obligation of "so that his heart does not become haughty over his brethren".

The influential power of external acts on internal feelings is extremely great. If one's external way of behavior has become ruined by negative traits, this will certainly affect one's innermost feelings, therefore our primary obligation is to take care that our external actions are appropriate. One who stays clear of acts which express conceit and arrogance, is promised that this modest behavior will be implanted deep inside him and will have a direct influence on the way he feels.

We have now entered the month of Elul- the month of mercy and forgiveness – the time to intensify regret and repentance for any wayward deeds. The requirement to repent is in fact a year-round obligation; every single Shabbat one is obligated to make a reckoning of one's deeds and repent just like during the month of Elul, which is alluded to by the fact that the word 'שבת' (Shabbat) contains the same letters as the word 'תשובה' (teshuva – repentance). Another association between Shabbat and Elul is that every Erev Shabbat we read 'Shir Hashirim', where it says 'אני לרודי ורודי לי', "I alone am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (Shir Hashirim 6:3), which is a reference to the month of Elul and the idea of repentance. In addition, every day in 'the Song of the Day' recited at the end of the shacharit prayer, we introduce the psalm with the following reference to Shabbat: "Today is the first/second/third... day of the Shabbat". We see from this that we are obligated to make a daily reckoning of our deeds and repent from our bad ways. However, during the month of Elul, the significance of repentance is even greater; it is a time when special Divine assistance is afforded to all those who wish to come closer to Hashem.

With repentance too, the prerequisite is submission to Hashem, and this deference to Hashem, being willing to subordinate oneself to Hashem and annulling one's personal will in deference to His Torah and His holiness, creates a strong bond in one's connection with Hashem and through this one fulfills the verse (Devarim 4:4), "But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d – you are all alive today."

May it be His will that we be successful in subordinating ourselves to Hashem and in fulfilling His every will, and through this may we merit being inscribed and sealed in the book of the righteous, immediately, for a good life and for peace, Amen V'Amen.

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## Hilula

7 – Rabbi Aryeh Leib Lopian

8 – Rabbi Yichya Amar

9 – Rabbi Tzaddok HaKohen of Lublin

10 – Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller

11 – Rabbi Shalom Yosef of Rozhin

12 – Rabbi Ahron Alkaslassi zya"l

13 – Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel, the 'Ben Ish Chai' zya"l

6 – Rabbi Yitzchak Hadaya



## Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

### "For That is Man's Entire Duty"

Many Jews from all over the world came to celebrate the wedding of my son, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, shlita, which took place in Eretz Yisrael. Mr. Matzliach n"y, an eminent philanthropist, was among the participants. He generously supports our holy institutions and donated a beautiful Sefer Torah to our Beit Hakneset in Ashdod. This Sefer Torah was written by the former Rav of the community, Rabbi Yosef Yakobi, zt"l.

The day after the wedding, Mr. Matzliach asked to meet with Rabbi Yakobi. To my regret, I informed him that Rabbi Yakobi had suddenly passed away.

On hearing the distressing news, Mr. Matzliach started sobbing like a small child and asked in shock, "Rabbi Yakobi was still young and appeared healthy. How could it be that he died so suddenly?"

"Now you realize why you came to Eretz Yisrael," I replied. "Not for my son's n"y wedding, but just to hear this news. This tragedy holds a message for you. You are a businessman and from morning to night, your head is involved in your business and material concerns. This way of life holds an inherent danger of forgetting Hashem, chas v'shalom, and disregarding His mitzvot, by regarding this world as the primary place of life, a place where one lives forever..."

Hashem therefore, sent you this message as a wake-up call. The tragic passing of this great man should teach you that this world is transient. Nobody lives forever."

My words entered his heart, and he asked what he could do to keep this message alive within him. I replied that he should resolve to improve in some spiritual matter.

"I will donate a sizeable sum to charity," he offered.

I told him that he is most generous and gives tzedakah in any event. Now is the time to take an additional mitzvah upon himself which would connect him in a stronger way with his Creator.

The idea of contemplating death can be inferred from the command, "Judges and officers shall you appoint" (Devarim 16:18). When a person considers all the young people who tragically left the world in a sudden manner r"l, it arouses thoughts of repentance and brings him closer to Hashem. These pious thoughts serve as "judges and officers". They discourage a person from committing bad deeds and bring him closer to the correct path.

## The Haftarah

"I, only I, am He Who comforts you" (Yeshaya 51)

The connection to Shabbat: This Haftarah is the fourth of the seven special 'Haftarot of Comfort' that are read starting with the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av. They are chapters of comfort for the Jewish people.



## Guard Your Tongue

### There Is No Difference

When speaking rechilut, there is no difference if the person tells over something of his own accord or if his friend realizes that something happened and begs this person to tell him what Ploni said about him.

This is also the case when a Rav or parent pleads that you tell them what Ploni said about them. Even if it is only avak rechilut, it is still forbidden.



## Words of our Sages

### Election Day in the Height of Chodesh Elul – A Springboard for Inspiration

Those who occupy the study halls need to be aware, the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita pointed out, that the development that we have been thrust into- holding re-elections during the month of Elul- was not determined by any human being, no matter their status. Rather, it is part of a Heavenly plan and it is clear that Hashem wishes to test us and see if we are 'voting' for the correct path in life.

As the Chareidi representatives report, the original plan was to hold the elections during 'bein hazmanim' (yeshiva intercession). However, the final decision was to fix the election day for the seventeenth of Elul. We should not think that this development is of no significance. The irreligious representatives are well aware that during the month of mercy and repentance the entire Chareidi community tries to diminish its occupation with mundane matters and seeks to increase the amount of time they spend in the Beit Midrash.

Accordingly, they imagine that this reality will significantly affect the commitment of the Chareidi parties. Their view is that the Chareidim will not invest the same efforts in fighting for every vote, as they did in previous elections. But, if they would only know the truth, it could very well be that they would try as hard as they could to prevent having elections in Elul...

Of course, the decision of how much and in which way to go about the process, we entrust to the Da'at Torah (Torah opinion) of the Gedolei Yisrael. But even before this directive, we must prove that while "Some with chariots, and some with horses; but we, in the name of Hashem, our G-d, call out" (Tehillim 20:8).

It is specifically the atmosphere of growth, repentance, strengthening our commitment to Hashem, searching for the truth and requesting forgiveness- the focus of the days of Elul, which will bring about Divine assistance to aid us in sanctifying Hashem's Name.

By arousing ourselves with prayer and repentance, with Torah and with good deeds, this will cause an awakening in Heaven, and then an abundance of mercy will be showered on us and the gates of success will be opened for us.

The truth is, that even the secular Government representatives are aware of this truth and they are also aware of the fact that when those who study the Holy Torah strengthen themselves, this is the best time to take measures that require special Divine assistance.

It is no secret that when the Prime Minister wished to blow up Iraq's nuclear power station, he wanted to hear the opinion of the Gedolei Hador before taking any action, and therefore sent his representatives to ask when would be the best time to blow it up.

The Gedolim replied that the most appropriate time was at four o' clock in the afternoon since this is the time when the Batei Midrashot are packed with Torah scholars. "It is the merit of Torah that will protect the planes and ensure that the entire project should succeed", they said.

We, too, can say that specifically these days of Elul, with the special atmosphere of growth that can be felt in the air, will stand in our stead to sanctify Hashem's name in an exceptional manner.

The days of repentance and forgiveness, when we pray "And so, too, O Hashem, our G-d, instill Your awe upon all Your works" will be days of strengthening our recognition in the Kingship of the Creator over the world. The elections, together with the fear of undesirable elements who wish to harm those who study Torah r"l, being nominated, will enable us to pray with greater intensity- "Let all works revere You and all creatures prostrate themselves before You" and to feel in a much more tangible way how much we require the Sovereignty of Hashem in the world. This awakening in itself, and the selichot which will be recited with additional fervor will help us, with siyata dishmaya, to be successful and we will merit declaring our Creator as King, with love and fear, with joy and holy awe.

"Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you."



## Pearls of the Parshah

### Protection that Opens Gates

**"Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities" (Devarim 16:18)**

The Chida writes in the name of Rabbi Chaim Vital zya" a, that each person has various 'gates' in his body: The gate of sight, the gate of hearing, the gate of smell, the gate of speech, the gate of eating.

The commandment "Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities", teaches us that a person must make a personal reckoning in all matters of his gates and this is why the verse is written in the singular, 'אתן לך' (shall you appoint), for this is a command that is incumbent on every Jewish person.

If a person guards and inspects his gates, for example, he does not look at things that he is forbidden to gaze at, does not listen to things that he is forbidden to hear, does not smell forbidden smells or does not eat forbidden foods, he will merit that middah k'negged middah, (G-d reciprocates our behavior), the gates of sha"i olamot (three hundred and ten worlds) will open for him and when his neshama ascends to the place from where it was hewn, all the gates will open for it. (Rabbi Chaim Vital zya" a)

The 'Aleinu L'Shabe'ach' adds another aspect. He says that "Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities...for your tribes", refers to tribulations. The word 'לישבטיך' (for your tribes), hints to suffering, as it says, "Your rod (שבטיך) and Your staff, they comfort me" (Tehillim 23:4) This teaches us that a person must prepare judges and officers on his troubles, meaning that he should use the type of affliction to try and diagnose the sin for which it came upon him.

### "Officer" Has the Same Numerical Value as "Prayer"

**"Judges and officers shall you appoint" (Devarim 16:18)**

The holy Alshich writes that an argument takes place between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. The Bnei Yisrael claim that 'if there is no flour there is no Torah', there must be ample income so that they should be free to toil in Torah. On the other hand, Hashem maintains that 'if there is no Torah, there is no flour', if they toil in Torah they will merit ample income.

The sefer 'Ateret Yeshua' writes that the above verse is a proof for our argument. When Ya'akov Avinu a" h blessed the tribes, he blessed Zevulun before Yissachar (although Yissachar was older). Zevulun used to deal in business and he supported Yissachar who was occupied with Torah.

This is what Moshe was implying when saying "Judges and officers". 'שופט' (judge) has the same numerical value as 'פרנסה' (income), whereas 'שומר' (officer) has the same numerical value as 'תפלה' (prayer). Moshe was hinting to the tzaddikim the order of bringing down Heavenly blessings of abundance for Am Yisrael- first bring down parnassah and after that, the people will be able to turn to prayer and serving Hashem. The proof is "which Hashem, your G-d, gives you – for your tribes", for when Ya'akov Avinu blessed the tribes he gave precedence to Zevulun before Yissachar.

### Fear of G-d When Tying Shoes

**"You shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left" (Devarim 17:11)**

The Gemara tells us that the right side is important since the Torah was given with the right and the left has importance because the tefillin are tied on the left (arm). Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says that a G-d fearing person can fulfill his obligation according to both these opinions through first putting on his right shoe but tying the left first, for the left is given importance because of its connection to tying.

A person might think, why do I have to be particular with this matter? The left and right are my limbs, what does fear of G-d have to do with how I put on my shoes and tie them? In answer to this reservation, the 'Yismach Moshe' splits up the wording of the verse and explains that "You shall not deviate from the word that they will tell," – from what the Sages tell you, also in "you(r) right and left". Even though they are your limbs, nevertheless you shall not swerve from the words of the Sages in this matter of right and left since every limb is a symbol of something Heavenly and it is fitting that all of a person's actions should be carried out according to the upper symbols.

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon  
Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya  
Pinto, shlita



### Dangerous Situations Call for A Reckoning

**"Who is the man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house" (Devarim 20:8)**

The parsha explains that when the Bnei Yisrael went to war, the Kohen who was anointed for battle spoke to the people and told them not to be afraid, and then the officers spoke to the people telling them that anyone who is fainthearted should return to his house, so that their fear should not weaken the morale of the other fighters. The Gemara explains that "the man who is fearful and fainthearted" refers to the man who is afraid because of his sins.

We can ask an interesting question. Why did they need to bring everyone to the battlefield and only then warn the fainthearted? Why did they not do this while they were still in the vicinity of their home? More than that, they were all familiar with the Torah commandment to question the people and tell those who are afraid to return home, so why do these fearful ones come to the battlefield in the first place? Knowing the outcome, wouldn't it be better if they just stayed at home? On the contrary, it is an embarrassment for them to go and then return home downtrodden knowing that they weren't accepted as a soldier in Hashem's army?

The explanation is that the evil inclination tries very hard to convince a person that he is faultless and wonderful, and therefore he does not detect his shortcomings. If you speak to him about repentance, he will wonder what this has to do with him since he doesn't have any reason to repent. But all this is true while he is still at home; in his familiar surroundings he is certain that he is free of sin, for "A person sees all defects but for his own". But once he finds himself in a place of danger, with the enemy and all their weapons facing him, he begins to feel fainthearted and fearful, and this causes him to examine his ways and thoroughly inspect every crevice of his soul. Now suddenly he finds all kinds of sins that he transgressed and he becomes afraid.

The answer to our question is now incredibly clear. The people were certainly aware of the condition that one who has sinned must return home, but they considered themselves free of sin and did not think this had any bearing on them personally. But, once they approached the battlefield, they began to feel fear of the enemy and this caused them to remember their sins and they then wished to return home. This is the reason why the Torah first mentions, "Who is the man who has built a new house... planted a vineyard... betrothed a woman... let him go and return to his house" before "Who is the man who is fearful (of sin)" so that these situations could serve as a cover for those who were returning because of their sins. Since only now they became aware of their sins, they would be embarrassed to return for the reason will be clear to all. By the officers preempting and asking who has built a home and didn't dedicate it etc., they will return home together with these categories of people which will hide the true reason for their return.

This teaches us an important lesson: A person may think he is perfect and doesn't have anything to rectify but when he is faced with terror, fear shakes his heart and returns him to the correct path. This idea may be a reason why this Parsha falls during the month of Elul which is the month of mercy and forgiveness. Our ethical teachers have pointed out on the verse, "A lion has roared; who will not fear?" (Amos 3:8), that the word 'אריה' (a lion) is an acronym for Elul, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabba, for these are days of fear and judgment which arouse a person to repent. While during the year a person does not notice his sins, these days return him to the correct path, through the fear of judgment that is present at this time. The fact that fear causes a person to take note and search his ways is the lesson that we derived from the above section of the Parsha.



# "LET HER BE PRAISED"

## Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil' In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

**צוֹפִיָּה הַלִּיכוֹת בֵּיתָהּ וְלֶחֶם לְעֵצָלוֹת לֹא תֹאכַל**

**"She anticipates the ways of her household,  
and does not eat the bread of laziness"**

Some time ago, Rechov Ezra in Bnei Brak was transformed into a building site, when a large area, destined to house a new building of massive proportions, was sectioned off.

As construction began, the area was sealed off with a solid opaque fence of metal sheets. Inside the lot, bulldozers energetically took huge bites out of the ground. The earth that was dug up was then transported by trucks to a dumping ground. Deep holes were drilled into the ground, into which round metal bars were inserted for the foundations. The next step was to pour cement into these holes which transformed them into sturdy pillars. This enabled the bulldozers to dig again and again to depths previously unknown into the ground, causing people to joke that their goal was to reach New Zealand, situated on the opposite side of the globe.

Seemingly, just another building project in Bnei Brak, nothing too out of the ordinary, but with this project, there was a fascinating advancement.

One day, several workers arrived from the site and cut out large rectangles in the metal fence that surrounded the building site. They affixed a sturdy frame to each of these openings and then inserted a glass window so that the passers-by would be able to observe this captivating digging process.

Since it is a well-populated and busy area, there was almost no moment when there weren't one or two people looking through each of these windows, the likes of which were a historical first.

The author and educator Harav Chaim Walder, related that he asked one of the developers on site as to why they had chosen to install these windows and make the site available for viewers and this was the reply that he received:

"We installed them because of the children. Children, by nature, are very curious beings and love to see construction work. But what happens? The metal fencing blocks their view so one child comes, twists the fence a little bit and peeks inside. A little later his friend turns up and bends the fence a little more. He is followed by another three hundred inquisitive children who each pry the fence open a little more until we are left with a substantial hole which endangers them and all those passing by. The same thing happens to the fence in a different place and within a month there is no longer

a fence. Actually, there is, but it more closely resembles a modern art creation of warped metal and besides the enormous danger of standing over a massive open pit, the fence itself poses a danger...

We tried to come up with a solution and this is how the idea was born to cut out windows for the children so that they could look to their heart's content. To our joy and amazement, it soon became clear that the adults were interested in watching no less than the children and suddenly, without any intention, we became the biggest attraction in town!"

"Obviously," he added, "there isn't even one small 'crease' in the fence. There is no longer any reason for the children to damage the fence since they have a permissible way of looking and they make the most of this opportunity."

This idea, writes Harav Walder, although it was not the initiators' intention, can be taken as a suitable lesson for a wide range of educational issues.

A fence is a border. All of us set limits for our children and students. A boundary is something that is meant to limit, to stop and prevent. The fence on Rechov Ezra is an excellent example of a dangerous situation that cannot be disregarded no matter what, but there is no danger in allowing people to look. This means that the purpose of the fence is not to stop people from looking, but to stop them from entering the site. The windows are the perfect solution that allows people to look without putting them in danger. To be precise, giving them the opportunity to look in a permissible way removes the danger because now they do not need to twist the fence.

We can expand this idea to include broader insights:

Every single child has outstanding and wonderful qualities, together with characteristics that can be defined as 'not quite positive' and even 'negative'.

Rightly so, we find ourselves continually trying to uproot the not quite positive qualities and of course, the real negative ones.

The Gemara in Shabbat says that it is fitting for a person who is born under the Zodiac of 'blood', to let blood or to become a shochet (Rabbinically ordained to slaughter animals). Since this person was born with an innate leaning to spill blood, the way to direct this is through letting blood in a way that assists others, for example in healing or slaughtering.

According to this approach, is it correct to evaluate each of the qualities in our children that appear to be 'negative', and instead of trying to quell them, to use our intelligence to find a way to direct these qualities in a positive fashion.