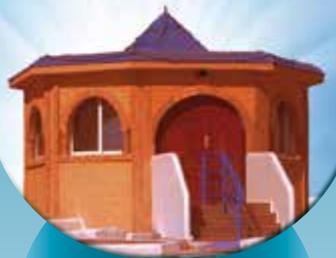


Shoftim

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Hilula

2 - Rabbi Aharon Chason

3 - Rabbi Eliyahu Mansani, a talmid of the Holy Ohr HaChaim

4 - Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen, the 'Dr Same'ach'

5 - The esteemed Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zya"o

6 - Rabbi Naim ben Eliyahu

7 - Rabbi Aryeh Leib Lopian

8 - Rabbi Yichya Amar

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"o

MASKIL LEDAVID



תשס"ו

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

Appoint Judges on Your Middot and Officers on your Thoughts

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

What novel insight is the Torah coming to tell us with this commandment? It is a basic and obvious fact that every country that wishes to function properly must appoint judges and officers to enforce law and order and all citizens are obligated to obey the country's constitution and laws. So why is necessary to have a special Torah command concerning this matter?

With siyata dishmaya, I would like to suggest an answer. The Torah is referring to the Yetzer Hara. We are being requested to appoint judges and officers over ourselves so that we should not be misled by the advice of our Yetzer Hara. For if a person does not appoint 'judges' over his desires and constraints on his indulgences, he will be carried away by the flood of his desires and G-d forbid fall to the depths. For the Yetzer Hara cunningly misleads a person and creates a feeling that he has nothing to worry about or be afraid of. With his slippery tongue, he subtly and cunningly draws him to the entrance of the pit. When a person finally wakes up from his slumber and wishes to repent, it is already too late. He is deeply immersed in the material matters of this world and awash in his cravings, from which it is almost impossible for him to withdraw. Therefore, the Torah necessitates "Judges and officers shall you appoint" so that they should warn him and help him discern at the moment he starts to get carried away, so that G-d forbid he should not fall into the trap of the Yetzer Hara and his ruses.

Similarly, a person must also appoint 'censors' on his bad middot so that he should not feel haughty and superior to others, for the trait of pride is extremely despicable. One who is affected by this negative trait is not received well by others and even his close family members are not fond of him. This matter is an important principle in marital harmony, for if a person feels and acts superior to his wife and considers himself as someone distinguished to whom all are obligated to fulfil his every wish and comply with his command, he thereby destroys his marital harmony and brings destruction upon himself. But if he is clever and realizes the value of submission and of humbling himself towards his wife, and even if she hurts him he forgives and forgoes, he is thereby erecting strong foundations for his home and then Hashem too is pleased with the couple and dwells among them, as it says (Sotah 17a) "A husband and wife who merit, the Shechina dwells between them; the Name of Hashem is among them."

One of my talmidim n"y, whom I had the merit of returning to a religious lifestyle, related that he would regularly visit a member of his family, a sick girl who was hospitalized and hovering between life and death r"l. While he was there he would also visit an elderly man in the adjacent room, encouraging him and bringing him treats to lift his spirits. One day the elderly man said to him, "Come, I wish to tell you a nice insight, for who knows

if you will see me again..." And this is what he told him: "Why, when we recite "He Who makes peace" at the end of the Shemone Esrei prayer, do we take three steps back? Because when one wishes to reconcile with someone and restore the peace, one is obligated to move back a few steps, to lower oneself and subdue one's heart. For if he stands by his rights and opinions, he can be sure that peace will keep its distance from him, and argument and strife will be his lot"...

Indeed, this insight that the elderly man told over is wonderful and accurate. It is a powerful principle for every Jewish home. From the beginning of their journey, the couple must establish for themselves 'judges and officers' on their middot and subdue the pride that they might feel over the other. If they are able to forgo an insult and transcend their rights, they are promised that theirs will be an eternal home for the Shechina to dwell in.

This way of behavior gives great pleasure to the Heavenly entourage and brings enormous joy to Hashem's dwelling place.

Also included in "Judges and officers shall you appoint" is when a person contemplates all those people who suddenly left us at a young age r"l. This rouses a person to repentance and brings him closer to Hashem Yitbarach. These are holy thoughts that are included in the concept of a person's 'judges and officers', for they serve to distance him from evil and bring him closer to the good.

There is a wealthy Jew who lives in New York whose precious son became ill with cancer r"l, and his situation was very serious. He came to me crying that I should pray for his recovery in the merit of my holy ancestors zya"o. With Hashem's help, his son eventually recovered and regained his health.

At the time I told him, "Make a commitment that this son will be a Ben Torah, dedicate him to Hashem Yitbarach". It was hard for him to accept this, so he replied, "Let's make a deal. This son who is a sharp and clever child will enter the business world, while I will dedicate my second son to Torah." "Hold fast to both," I told him. "The older son will be a Ben Torah and a businessman." He agreed to my advice and indeed today that son has made great strides in the business world, but Torah remains his main priority while his profession is subordinate to it. He has fixed study times for Torah every single day for several hours, and I am aware that baruch Hashem, he has merited finishing the entire Shas twice. With Hashem's kindness, the second son too follows in his footsteps and is a true Ben Torah whose considers the Torah as his profession.

This is an example of a Jew who merited placing 'officers' on his personal desires and 'judges' on his Yetzer Hara, and with great self-sacrifice agreed to dedicate his sons to Torah. Today he enjoys much nachat and joy from them, and they embody "All your children will be students of Hashem...the seed that Hashem has blessed".



Walking in their Ways

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

Inspiring anecdotes from the life of the esteemed Rabbi Moshe Aharon

Pinto zya" a

In honor of the twentieth hilula of my father and teacher, Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto zya" a, which will take place this week on the fifth of Elul, I would like to relate several inspiring stories that demonstrate the piety of my esteemed father zya" a. May they serve as a lesson for us in our own avodah Hashem.

About five years before his passing, we travelled together to Morocco and stopped over in Marseille, France where we stayed at someone's home. When our host told us that there was no minyan in his area, Abba said that if this is the case he will have to find accommodations in the center of town for he has an obligation to be called up to the Torah reading. Our host replied in dismay, "What will be with me if you leave? You bring blessing to our home." Abba then said, "Listen, tonight I will stay with you but tomorrow I will go to the town where I will be able to pray with a minyan."

"But the town is about four to five kilometers away" the host pointed out. However, for Abba it made no difference.

I turned to my father, "Abba! How will you manage such a long distance? You have a hernia and even walking a hundred meters already tires you out!" But nothing could stop him.

The next morning several people came to accompany us and Abba walked for two hours straight, without stopping even once. It was simply amazing.

Another observation that is worth pointing is that throughout the way, Abba kept his eyes focused on the ground and did not look up even once. When someone asked him, "How do you manage not to pick up your eyes at all?" He answered with humility, "Now during the summer the streets may be fouled by dogs' mess, therefore I keep looking down so as not to filthy my legs. In truth, with this answer, Abba was evading the real issue. I know well why he constantly gazed downward. It was

because the streets were full of immodesty (this incident took place during the month of Av/July-August) and Abba was most particular to guard his eyes. Whenever he spoke to someone he would always lower his eyes, no matter whether the person he was conversing with was someone great or a simple person.

Similarly, when I travelled with my father zya" a to England to see an ophthalmologist, even though it was his first visit and Abba did not look up as he walked, he was able to find his way to the office. He led the way as if he knew the route by heart, without asking for directions.

The tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto would always sympathize with other people's troubles, in line with the pasuk "In all their troubles, he was troubled." He would pray for others after lighting many candles l'iluy nishmat his holy father. He exemplified the pasuk "A tzaddik decrees, and Hashem fulfills his wish".

He believed strongly in the merits of his holy fathers. If anyone would come to seek his blessings, he would bless them only in the merits of his exalted fathers, not referring any greatness to himself, in complete humility and self-effacement.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived humbly and modestly. When Torah scholars would come to receive his blessings, he would stretch out his hand in greeting, but pull it back before they had a chance to kiss it. Afterward, he would try to evade being asked for his blessings, or to pray for them, saying, "Who am I to bless you? After all, you are sitting in the Beit Hamidrash elucidating the words of the holy Abaye and Rava. Blessed are you that you merit being involved in the study of the holy Torah."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived by the words of the Mishnah, "Be exceedingly humble in spirit." When someone would approach him, whether rich or poor, prominent or destitute, he would stand up to honor him. When he was once asked about this behavior, he explained, "Every person possesses a spark of Hashem, and I stand up in honor of that spark... Do not look at the vessel, but what is in it."

May his merit protect us, Amen.



In Our Father's Path

The Baby's Smile Melted my Heart

Chodesh Elul is characterized as a time of repentance and good deeds. Every G-d fearing Jew occupies himself with repentance and good deeds in preparation for the day of Judgement. In a talk given by the Admor of Dinov shlita, he lauded the significance of the effort of every Jew during the month of Elul, even if G-d forbid, he has committed many sins.

There are some who unfortunately fall into despair. They feel that since they committed so many and such terrible sins, repentance is not meant for them. Repentance, they believe, is only for the righteous. But for people like them, who have sinned so much and followed the desires of their hearts and indolence of their bodies, what connection is there between them and repentance?!

The Bnei Yissachar tells us something awesome. Sometimes it is possible to bring Hashem great pleasure from a sinful act, and even from a transgression as serious as avodah zara. How? Through full repentance. Since the Torah testifies that one who transgresses will lose all Worlds, yet this fact does not perturb the sinner and he nevertheless repents sincerely to Hashem and begins to obey Him, this is a great pleasure for Hashem that a Jew initiates.

It is known that the Maggid of Mezritch was most destitute and had no money to buy food for his children. One day, when hunger overcame them, the Rabbanit approached the Maggid and poured out her distress that she has nothing with which to feed their children. Out of deep sorrow, a sigh escaped the Maggid's pure heart, and immediately after, he heard a declaration from Heaven that due to that sigh he had lost his share in the World to Come since Hashem is particular with the righteous like a hairsbreadth.

At first, he was grief-stricken. He had toiled and labored so greatly in Torah, and now all this had brought him no benefit, he will receive not a single drop of reward in the Next World. But he immediately strengthened himself and declared, "If until now I studied Torah with some personal bias for I also considered the reward that I would receive, from now on I will occupy myself with Torah only for the sake of giving pleasure to the Creator since as I already lost my share in the World to Come, I will not benefit from it personally." The Maggid immediately returned to his learning with renewed strength, until he heard another declaration announcing in Heaven that he has once again merited a share in the World to Come.

The Admor of Dinov shlita related that someone once told him that his young child would disturb his sleep every night, and one night he even cried the entire night. The father, not having slept a wink the entire night, was extremely angry with his young, spoilt child. Since anyway he couldn't sleep, he went to pray with the vatikin minyan and when he returned from his prayers still angry with his son, he went to his room and the child, who was sitting up in his crib gave him the widest, cutest smile, as is the way of babies. "At that moment, all the anger that I felt melted as if it never existed. His smile melted my heart and my love for him was re-awakened, as if he hadn't kept me awake the entire night."

If a father's love for his child is only a mashal for Hashem's love of His nation Yisrael about whom it says, "You are children to Hashem, your G-d", how much more so is it that all we need to do is just smile to Hashem to show Him that we love Him and wish to do His will and in just one instant, He will accept our repentance with open arms, in a manner of speaking.

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 Consolation' that are read starting with the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av. They are chapters of consolation for the Jewish people.

Guard Your Tongue

Go and Learn

One who gossips about his friend transgresses the negative commandment "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people" (Vayikra 19:16). The reason why this command is immediately followed by the command "you shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed" (ibid), is since it is a most severe sin which can lead to the death of many Jewish souls.

We should learn a lesson from the rechilut that Do'eg Ha'Adomi spoke, as a result of which the entire population of Nov, the city of Kohanim, was killed.



Pearls of the Parsha

Treasures

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



Giving Charity from Money Earned Honestly

"Righteousness, righteousness [lit. charity] shall you pursue, so that you shall live" (Devarim 16:20)

Rabbi Yehuda expounded on this verse (Baba Batra 10a), "Charity is great for it brings the redemption closer, as it says (Yeshaye 56:1), "Thus said Hashem: Observe justice and perform righteousness [lit. charity], for My salvation is soon to come".

How did Rabbi Yehuda learn from this verse that charity alone brings the redemption closer? Does the verse not say, observe justice and perform charity? So maybe it is particularly charity that is performed together with justice that brings the redemption closer? Maybe charity alone is not enough?

The 'Ben Ish Chai' zya"a, in the name of his son Rabbi Ya'akov, answers that charity alone can help to bring the redemption closer, but on condition that those who give the charity observe justice, for not every act of charity has the power to bring the redemption nearer. It is particularly charity that is performed with money earned in an honest and justified manner and contains no trace of theft, but "one who amasses wealth unjustly" (Yirmiya 17:11), even if he separates charity from this wealth, it is not desired by Hashem, for Hashem "loves justice and hates a burnt-offering [bought] with robbery" (Yeshaye 61:8). This, then, is the explanation of the verse, "observe justice and perform righteousness [lit. charity]".

From this explanation Rabbi Mantzur Ben Shimon zt"l derived that this might be what the Torah is hinting to us by saying "Righteousness, righteousness [lit. charity] shall you pursue". Meaning, if you wish to give charity, do it with money that was earned righteously. In this way, your charity will bring the final redemption closer.

Charity is Not Considered as a Gift

"Righteousness, righteousness [lit. charity] shall you pursue, so that you shall live and possess the Land" (Devarim 16:20)

The Midrash explains that this verse is clarifying the mitzvah of charity since Moshe taught Am Yisrael the Torah, the laws and charity. From where do we know that he taught them about charity? As it says, "Righteousness, righteousness [lit. charity] shall you pursue".

Rabbi Eliyahu Chadad zt"l, in his sefer 'Chedvat Eliyahu', poses the following difficulty: Does the Mishna not tell us (Avot 1:3), "Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward"? So how can the Torah tell us to pursue righteousness "so that you shall live and possess the Land"?

The Gemarah says (Megillah 28a) that when the Nassi would send gifts to Rabbi Elazar, he did not wish to accept them since it is written "one who hates gifts will live".

It could be that due to this, it might seem fitting not to give charity to the poor, for through one's gifts to the poor one is causing them to die. To counteract this claim, the Torah stresses "so that you shall live and possess the Land", by giving charity to the poor you receive payment from Hashem in This World. Therefore, this charity is no longer considered as a 'gift', but rather as a 'business deal'. Now it is no longer appropriate to say "one who hates gifts will live" and therefore one should not give charity, since Hashem repays the giver in exchange for his charity.

The Worms Reveal the Murderer's House

"But you shall remove the innocent blood from your midst when you do what is upright in the eyes of Hashem" (Devarim 21:9)

The Holy Shelah writes in the name of Rabbeinu Menachem, that if Yisrael merit, worms come out of the body of the heifer and crawl in the direction of the murderer's house, and then the Beit Din who are now aware of his identity, take him to court. (A heifer is taken and axed as an atonement for this murder.)

According to this explanation, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita clarifies the verse, "But you shall remove the innocent blood from your midst". You will find the murderer and remove him from the world. How will you merit this? Through "when you do what is upright in the eyes of Hashem". If you behave in this way, then you will be fitting to (find him and) remove him!

The sefer 'Panei'ach Raza' brings a fitting allusion for this: The last letters of the words 'ואתה תבער דם הנקי' (but you shall remove the innocent blood), can be re-arranged to spell 'רימה', worms. This implies that through worms, meaning the worms that come out of the heifer, the identity of the murderer will be revealed and you will merit removing the innocent blood.

I heard the following powerful story from Mr. Yehuda Dehan, concerning his father Rabbi Meir Dehan z"l.

Rabbi Meir Dehan zt"l once asked if he could accompany my holy grandfather, Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto zya"a, to the city of Marrakesh to where he would travel from time to time. My holy grandfather agreed and Rabbi Meir drove him to Marrakesh in his car.

When they arrived, all the town's leaders came out to greet them and the townspeople welcomed them with great honor, as is fitting for the honor of Torah. Suddenly, from among the crowds, a brazen-faced goy approached Rabbeinu and began disgracing and defaming him, even spitting on his forehead on the exact spot where Rabbeinu placed his Tefillin.

Rabbi Meir Dehan, who witnessed the incident, related: Right then, the town's leaders who were shocked at this goy's brazenness, wished to wipe the tzaddik's face from the spittle, but my Saba a"h prevented them and said, "I do not seek my honor, I forgive the slight to my honor, but since the goy spat on the sacred place where I lay Tefillin, this I cannot forgive by any means. For the sake of the honor of Hashem, I will indeed seek revenge and hold it against him." And he added, "You will soon see Hashem's strong hand."

Suddenly from an unknown place, a French police officer appeared, took his gun, aimed it exactly at the goy's forehead, and shot him and killed him in front of the crowd...

Morei v'Rabbotai, the Holy Rabbeinu Chaim is someone who merited placing 'judges and officers' on his gateways throughout this life. Therefore, the Yetzer Hara was unable to conquer his heart and implant feelings of pride and vulgarity. He was easily appeased and was able to forgive and overlook his personal disgrace, for he possessed not a trace of personal pride. However, the honor of Hashem was extremely important to him, for Hashem's presence was constantly before his eyes. And for this, he could not forgive or pardon. That is why this goy received his punishment. "So may all Your enemies be destroyed, O Hashem!" (Shoftim 5:31).

May it be His will that Hashem merit us to fight against our Yetzer Hara and subdue him by placing superior protection at every step of our path in life, especially during these holy days of Elul.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

"Judges and officers shall you appoint in all your cities"

(Devarim 16:18)

Who, in fact, were these judges and officers that the Holy Torah commands us to appoint in all our cities?

Rashi, at the beginning of the Parsha, explains "The officers are the ones who ensure that the people obey their commands. They hit and bind with a stick and whip until the person accepts the ruling of the judge".

When appointing officers, the person had to agree to accept this position and fulfill the command of appointing officers over Bnei Yisrael. Rabbi Yehuda Lichtenstein, in his sefer 'Avodat Yehuda', points out something fascinating. When offering someone this position, his acceptance was essentially an agreement to strike the Jewish people.

If, for example, we would see a notice in the 'Wanted' section of the newspaper, that Moshe Rabbeinu is seeking men who are prepared to strike Bnei Yisrael, how many applications would he receive? The Gemarah in Makot explains that these officers were not corrupt people who were anyway accustomed to hitting and tyrannizing others. On the contrary, the officer had to be a compassionate person who would not hit too much or too strongly. This being the case, who from among Bnei Yisrael would want to go and buy whips to beat their people? In addition, the verse does not tell us that they received remuneration for this.

Which Jew would offer to become an officer when it involved forcefully hitting his brethren? And how is it possible to hit a Jew if the Torah orders us 'love your fellow as yourself'? Since we are forbidden to cause pain to any Jew, who then is capable of picking up his hand against a fellow Jew?

The Maggid, Hagaon Rabbi M.Y. Reizman shlita, explains this matter beautifully by relating an incident that occurred as a result of the Spanish expulsion, which took place on Tish'a B'Av 5252. Not all the Jewish people were capable of withstanding the challenge of escaping from the country while leaving all their possessions behind, as some three hundred thousand Jewish people did do

amid great self-sacrifice (see 'Abarbanel' for more details). Many of the Jews who decided to remain in Spain became 'anusim' (secret Jews) and observed Judaism in secret. Many of these anusim found themselves unable to withstand the pressure, for the Inquisition would burn anyone whom they suspected of secretly practicing Judaism. Out of great fear and dread, many of them eventually decided to follow their brothers and secretly leave Spain.

When they arrived in Eretz Yisrael, a group of these anusim came crying to Rabbi Yaakov Beirav. They related that during that period when they had to hide the fact that they were Jews, they had no choice and several times under the duress of death they desecrated the Shabbat, ate forbidden foods or consumed food on Yom Kippur, so as to make them appear outwardly as true Christians. If they felt that the long arm of the Inquisition was spying on them, they transgressed several Torah prohibitions, even though according to Torah law they were not considered as an anus, meaning one who is exempt under exceptional circumstances. As the king had offered them the choice of leaving the country by Chodesh Cheshvan if they so wished to remain practicing Jews, they were not considered as truly having any other option but to sin since it was their own choosing to remain, albeit under these terrifying conditions.

Rabbi Yaakov Beirav wrote that these anusim cried to him bitterly to save them from the punishment of Kareit (the soul of the sinner is cut off from life in the World to Come, or early death). Anyone receiving lashes is released from the Divine punishment of kareit. One deserving kareit means he committed a negative transgression for which he is liable to lashes from the Beit Din. The dishonor of receiving lashes gives him atonement and permits his life to be spared.

They stood at the Rabbi Yaakov Beirav's door, sobbing terribly, begging him to agree to give them lashes. But from the time we were exiled from our Land, we no longer have the authority to give lashes. This is something that is permitted only if there is a Beit Din that was ordained by an authority that leads back to Moshe Rabbeinu. So how could Rabbi Yaakov Beirav penalize them with lashes?

The Rabbi Yaakov Beirav decided to follow a ruling from the Rambam, who writes that if all the Jewish people who dwell in Eretz Yisrael unanimously agree that one particular tzaddik is the Gadol Hador, this Gadol has the authority to ordain a Beit Din, just as Moshe

Rabbeinu had the power to do. And so it was, all the Sages of Tzefat crowned Rabbi Yaakov Beirav as the ruling authority, and with this great power he gave authority to another three of the generation's tzaddikim, the Mabit, the Alshich and Maran the Beit Yosef. This Beit Din convened and appointed officers who gave lashes to the Jews who had escaped from Spain. How great was their joy at now being exempt from the punishment of kareit! The following Shabbat they made a Kiddush to celebrate the occasion.

In those days, a great tzaddik called the Ralbach, Rabbeinu Levi Chaviv, lived in Yerushalayim. He wrote to the Sages of Zefat, saying how can it be that they did such a thing without first concurring with the Sages of Yerushalayim. Furthermore, how could they give lashes, for the penalty of lashes must always be preceded by a warning? Rabbi Yaakov Beirav replied with several reasonings, to which the Ralbach wrote back citing his opinion. This entire exchange of letters between them is printed at the end of the responsa of Rabbi Yaakov Beirav, and in the responsa of the Ralbach. Among other things, Rabbi Yaakov Beirav wrote to the Ralbach that if he would have witnessed their desperate weeping, he too would have found a way to by-pass the absence of the condition of warning.

The 'Avodat Yehuda' zt"l writes that this was the idea behind the position of 'officers' among Bnei Yisrael. The officer did not raise his hand or stick without the one being struck begging the officer, "Please I beg of you, have compassion on my wretched soul and purify it through lashes". If someone is liable because of a certain sin that he transgressed in This World, we have no idea of the great distress that the soul experiences in the World of Truth, but through a bit of pain that the body suffers down in This World, the soul can be purified for eternity. The Gemara tells us (Megillah 7b): "Since he was struck, he is considered as your brother". This demonstrates the relationship between the one who carries out the penalty of lashes and the sinner.

This is precisely the meaning of the verse, "Judges and officers shall you appoint". Bnei Yisrael joyfully appointed these officers over them. G-d forbid, the officers did not accept this position due to corrupt middot, nor was it considered as degrading work. On the contrary, the officer had the merit of purifying the souls of Bnei Yisrael. As Rabbi Yaakov Beirav relates, the anusim rejoiced to such an extent when receiving the lashes for it exempted their souls from the sentence of kareit.