



## Living with the Aspiration to Fulfil Mitzvot

**"Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light"** (Bamidbar 8:2)

The commentators discuss why this passage regarding the Menorah is placed immediately after the long recitation of the offerings of the tribal leaders. Citing the Midrash, Rashi comments that Aharon was chagrined that every tribe, represented by its leader, had a role in dedicating the new Tabernacle, while he and his tribe of Levi were excluded. Consequently, G-d comforted him by saying that his service was greater than theirs because he would prepare and kindle the Menorah.

It is necessary to understand why Aharon was disturbed by the fact that his tribe did not participate in the dedication of the Alter. There are many sectors among Am Yisrael who have been charged with observing certain mitzvot which others are not obligated to fulfil. For example, offering the sacrifices and serving in the Beit Hamikdash is the exclusive role of the Kohanim. And the Kohen Gadol is the only one who may enter the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur to atone for Am Yisrael; no other person is permitted to enter this holy place. Parshat Hakhel is read by the king. Only someone who owns a field can fulfil the mitzvot of leket, shikcha and peah, while others are not obligated in this mitzvah.

Do we feel jealous of the Kohen because we cannot bless the congregants every day? This is a mitzvah given to Kohanim alone! So why was Aharon chagrined that his tribe did not participate in the dedication of the Alter, especially since his tribe, Levi, was charged with many different services in the Beit Hamikdash that other tribes could not perform? In fact, this is why the Levites are called 'the King's Legion'. There must be a reason why Aharon was jealous specifically of the fact that he had no share in the dedication of the Alter.

Another difficulty is to understand why Aharon was comforted by the fact that Hashem told him his share is greater than theirs, for he will prepare and kindle the lights.

The answer could be because the dedication of the Alter by the tribal leaders demonstrates a wondrous concept.

The Torah goes to great length describing each leader's offering, when it could have just detailed the first one and concluded by saying that each leader brought the same. This is particularly surprising in light of the fact that in other places the Torah is very concise, to the extent that important laws are derived from just one letter or word. So here, why does the Torah, seemingly unnecessarily, go to great length relating the same details twelve times?

We can reconcile this difficulty with the following Chazal (Sifri, Nasso): "Rabbi Natan said, why were the leaders the first to donate for the dedication of the Alter, while for the work of the Mishkan they did not donate first? [With the work of the Mishkan] the leaders said: 'Let the people donate first and whatever is missing we will complete.' But the people donated enough for all the work, as it says, 'But the work had been enough', and then the leaders said, 'What is left for us to bring?' So they brought the Shoham stones. This is why they were the first to donate with the dedica-

tion of the Alter. But because in the first case they lacked zealotness, the letter yud is missing from their name and it is written והנשא, and the leaders."

The leaders were relaxed and did not rush to donate for the work of the Mishkan. Even though they had positive intentions of completing whatever would be missing after the rest of the people donated their gifts, nevertheless this showed some trace of indolence. They should have realized that with their strong love for Hashem, the people will bring all the necessary materials. So at the time of the dedication of the Alter, the leaders repented by bringing their offering with alacrity.

This repentance could have caused competition among the tribal leaders as to who will bring the most fitting offering for the Alter. But they lived in wonderful harmony and each leader brought the exact same donation; not one of them brought even the slightest bit more than the other. Since Hashem loves this kind of unity, He therefore accepted their repentance.

This could be the reason why Hashem repeats their donation twelve times, even though they were all identical. He thus informed them that their repentance had been accepted willingly, for unity is most desirable before Hashem.

Due to this, Aharon was particularly upset by the leaders' donation at the dedication of the Alter. Although it is true the Kohen Gadol has many mitzvot others do not have, a mitzvah done with perfection, in complete unity, is so great and precious to the extent that it is appropriate to be jealous of it, as in "Jealousy of the learned increases wisdom".

When Hashem comforted Aharon HaKohen, He did not just tell him that he would kindle the lights of the Menorah, but added that he would also cleanse and prepare the Menorah. This was an allusion to the extent with which Aharon longed to fulfil the mitzvot with perfection. He saw the leaders bringing an offering for the Alter with such great perfection and unity and was jealous. So Hashem comforted him by saying that he too will merit fulfilling the mitzvot with perfection. Before kindling the lights, he will remove any residue so as to clean and purify the Menorah, and in this way the mitzvah will be carried out with the greatest perfection.

This serves as a lesson for us not to suffice with performing the mitzvot out of habit. Rather we must long and search to fulfil them with perfection, and when a mitzvah opportunity comes our way we should grasp hold of it and not let it slip out of reach. I once noticed someone who heard another person wishing someone mazal tov. He went over to him and asked what the occasion was. He replied that this person had just made a Brit Milah for his son. On hearing this answer the fellow was very distressed and said, "What a shame I did not know. I could have had the merit of participating in the Brit Milah and earning an additional mitzvah!"

This is an example of someone who runs after mitzvot! When deprived of a mitzvah opportunity, even if not at fault, he is filled with pain as great as if he had lost the largest prize in the lottery!



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## Hilula

18 - Rabbi David of Cracow

19 - Rabbi Yehuda ben Attar, Av Beit Din of Pass

20 - Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Leviton, author of 'Nochach HaShulchan'

21 - Rabbi Shimon Sofer, author of 'Hitorerut Teshuva'

22 - Rabbi Itamar Rosenbaum, Admor of Nadvarna

23 - Chacham Refael Alshvili, Rav of Gorizia

24 - Rabbi Massud HaKohen Alchaded



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Singing His Praises

We were once asked to arrange a dinner on behalf of a charity organization. We reserved a large, majestic hall which would fit the numerous guests. Attention was paid to each detail of the event, so that the maximum benefit would be gained. With a lavish meal and a splendid ambiance, the potential donors would be encouraged to open their pockets widely for the worthy cause at hand.

A well-known singer and choir were reserved for the pleasure of the attendees. I put forth a prayer that the event should go smoothly and productively, with no hitches. But on the afternoon of the event, I received a call from the singer who related that he had a bad back and could not appear in such a manner. For a moment, I was too stunned to speak. I tried gathering my wits about me and coming up with a viable solution.

But the man had something to add. "Honored Rav, bless me that I feel better quickly so that I can come, as planned." I warmly blessed him in the merit of my holy ancestors that he should return to his regular functioning. I prayed for him and even called up my son, Rabbi Refael, shlita, asking him to light candles in memory of the tzaddikim for the singer's recovery.

My son, Refael, has the same name as the Angel Refael who is appointed for recovery. I have seen examples of my son's extraordinary power to help those in need of healing.

Here is one instance: The Chief Rabbi of France, Rabbi Yosef Sitruk, shlita, was once in a deep coma. I came to visit him and placed the special walking stick of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"a, on his eyes. Rabbi Sitruk immediately awoke and began moving his limbs. But one leg remained immobile.

Weeks passed and I visited Rabbi Sitruk once again. But this time, I was accompanied by my son, Rabbi Refael. This time I asked my son to place the stick on the paralyzed leg. I hoped that the merit of the tzaddikim, after whom my son is named, coupled with the power of the Angel Refael, would come to my son's aid, and with Hashem's help he will be able to heal Rabbi Sitruk's leg.

My son did as I asked and with Hashem's kindness, Rabbi Sitruk's leg was completely healed!

For this reason, I now asked my son Refael to light candles on behalf of this singer. Then I went about my business in making last minute arrangements for the grand event.

Suddenly, my entire body became paralyzed. I could not move at all. This took all of three minutes, after which my muscles relaxed, and I returned to normal. A short while later, the singer phoned me up and happily reported that he was no longer in pain from his back. His muscles had returned to normal and he could appear as planned.

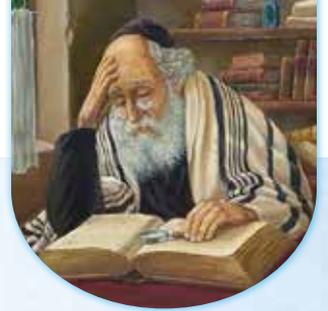
I was delighted to hear his report and related what had happened to me a few minutes earlier. The man listened, enraptured. When I finished speaking, he excitedly said that just when I was experiencing a heavy feeling throughout my body, his back began returning to normal.

Hashem was showing us that He is the force behind everything. Without Heavenly assistance, we simply cannot do a thing. Chazal teach us (Chulin 7b), "One does not stub one's finger in this world unless it was decreed on High, as it says, 'A man's steps are established by Hashem' (Tehillim 37:23), 'But what does man understand of His ways?'" (Mishlei 20:24)"

## Guard Your Tongue

### First Rid Yourself of Your Negative Feelings and Then Relate the Facts

It is forbidden to derive pleasure from relating derogatory information, even if one is doing so with beneficial intentions. This is particularly difficult if one must speak about someone whom one doesn't like. It is essential to first of all uproot any feelings of hatred or resentment from one's heart, and only then can one relate the necessary negative information, permitted for a beneficial purpose.



## In Our Father's Path

### What Happens When the Chatan Runs Away Just Before the Chuppah?

After the Holy Torah tells us that Miriam the prophetess spoke negatively about Moshe Rabbeinu, father of all prophets, regarding his relationship with Tziporah, the Torah concludes, "And the man Moshe was exceedingly humble." Moshe was so humble, he did not relate to Tziporah's beauty, but rather to her deeds. And it was particularly due to Moshe Rabbeinu's humility that Hashem spoke to him and rested His Presence on him.

HaRav HaGaon Rabbi Gamliel Rabinowitz shlit"a (Tiv Hama'asiyot) tells a story about Rabbi Avraham Shenker zt"l, son-in-law of the Gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld zt"l. Family Kopshitz, famous in the Torah world, are descendants of Rabbi Avraham zt"l and the Gaon Rabbi Yosef Chaim zt"l.

The elderly Sages of Yerushalayim suggested a reason why Rabbi Avraham merited such a wonderful and glorious golden family tree of grandsons and great-grandsons, exceptional Talmidei Chachamim. They proposed it was because Rabbi Avraham's marriage was built on the foundations of self-sacrifice for the honor of a mitzvah; so that a Jewish girl should be saved the pain of embarrassment.

This is the story:

Long ago, due to the distance between the hometown of the chatan and kallah, it was common for the chatan to meet his kallah for the first time only just before the chuppah, in fulfillment of the law that one is obligated to see one's kallah before performing kiddushin: "One is forbidden to consecrate a wife until he sees her first, in case he will perceive her to be unattractive and dislike her, and the Merciful One said, 'You shall love your fellow as yourself'."

At this particular wedding, the kallah was seated on the bride's chair prepared especially in her honor, looking beautiful in her wedding dress and adorned with jewelry as is customary for a bride. But when the chatan came to see her, he noticed that she limped slightly. He insisted that since he had not been informed of this imperfection, it was considered as 'a mistaken deal'. He declared that he wants to break up the engagement and does not wish to marry her. Without further ado, the chatan and his family left the wedding hall.

When the kallah realized what this meant, a torrent of heartrending sobs erupted from deep inside her soul. She cried without let-up, deeply offended by the terrible, stinging insult she was treated to while sitting on the throne of royalty. A huge commotion broke out in the hall.

Among the participants was a bachur named Avraham Shenker. The kallah's tears and heartbreak deeply affected his sensitive soul. On the spot, he offered to marry the girl so as to spare her this disgrace and humiliation.

Both sets of parents, who knew each other from way-back, discussed the details and were pleased with the match. They sat down to write up a marriage contract and the chuppah took place immediately, in accordance with the Jewish law. And so Avraham salvaged the dignity of the kallah and her entire family.

"It is self-understood," pointed out the elders of Yerushalayim, "that this kind of match will produce offspring of exceptional caliber; great, G-d fearing, Talmidei Chachamim and distinguished Rabbanim from among the most glorious Gedolei Hador."



## Pearls of the Parsha

### Complainers? It's their Nature

*"The people took to seeking complaints; it was evil in the ears of Hashem" (Bamidbar 11:1)*

What exactly did they complain about? The verse does not give a clear answer. The Ramban writes, "They spoke like complainers; they spoke bitterly, like those who are suffering, and it was evil in Hashem's eyes for they should have followed Him with joy and gladness due to all the good He bestowed upon them."

The sefer Ta'am Hatzvi writes that the essence of a complainer is that he is full of complaints. It does not make much difference about what, in every situation he will find something to grumble about.

So it is in every generation. No matter the situation, some people are full of criticism. Woe to them that they find what to complain about at all times.

This is why Hashem was so angry with them. Why do they not see things with a positive eye? The Torah conceals the reason for their dissatisfaction for the simple reason that there was nothing to their complaint; whatever would be they would find something to complain about...

### Slackening in Torah Brings War

*"When you go [to wage] war in your Land" (Bamidbar 10:9)*

Seemingly, the word מלחמה – war, is missing the letter lamed. It should have said, למלחמה – to wage war.

HaRav HaKadosh Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov zt"l (Igra D'Kallah) resolves this grammatical discrepancy with an important lesson:

It is hard to understand how there will ever be war in our Land, for Hashem promised that even a sword of peace will not pass in our Land as it says (Vayikra 26:6), "and a sword will not cross your Land."

Rather, the idea is that if, G-d forbid, the people become lax in Torah study, they must then be afraid of battle. This is what the missing lamed alludes to: If limud (Torah study) is missing, this will be the cause of war in the land.

But if there is Torah study then there is no Satan and no evil mishap.

### Don't Get Overwhelmed by Criticism

*"Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it?" (Bamidbar 11:12)*

Maran Rabbi Chaim Kanievski shlita urged his close acquaintances not to take other people's criticism to heart.

He related that his father zt"l explained to him the meaning of the verse (Te-hillim 106:16), "They were jealous of Moshe in the camp; of Aharon, Hashem's holy one". Concerning Moshe, who was set apart and ascended to heaven, the people protested that he was supposed to be in the camp, while about Aharon, who loved peace and pursued peace and was in the camp, they said Hashem's holy one should be set apart!

He added an amusing anecdote that is brought in the ancient sefarim. A father and son were once traveling together. The father rode on the donkey while the son walked next him. Someone met them and said to the father, "Where is your compassion for your son? Get off the donkey and let your son ride!"

Someone else came across the pair and turned to the son who was now riding on the donkey: "Is this how you honor your father?!" So both rode on the donkey.

A third person met them and declared, "Where is your compassion for the donkey?" They both alighted.

A fourth person met them and exclaimed, "Three donkeys are walking and one does not ride on the other?!"

They picked up the donkey and carried it on their shoulders.

This is the end of one who is intimidated by what others say...

## Treasures

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



### Torah Study Without Mitzvah Fulfillment Does Not Endure

*"Speak to Aharon and say to him: When you kindle the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps cast light" (Bamidbar 8:2)*

The name of the Parshah, Beha'alotcha – when you kindle – begins with the letter 'beit' which has the numerical value of two. This alludes to the fact that elevating oneself in Avodat Hashem is dependent on two things: Torah study and mitzvah observance (beha'alotcha can also be translated as 'when you rise up').

Indeed, it is appropriate for every Jew to be aware that Torah study without mitzvah performance does not endure, since the primary goal of Torah study is for the sake of observing its mitzvot. Similarly, fulfilling the mitzvot in absence of Torah study is also deficient, since it is the actual Torah study that arouses a person to mitzvah observance. Also, through studying the Torah and its laws one becomes aware of the correct way to perform the mitzvot.

Many people claim that it is enough for them to fulfill the mitzvot, and since they already know what they must observe, they do not need to study Torah. Those who come with this claim should be told clearly that it is impossible to fulfill Hashem's mitzvot in the best and most perfect way without studying the Holy Torah. For besides the fact that the Torah teaches and guides us how to perform the mitzvot, it also has the power of awakening a person to observe the mitzvot and cautioning him regarding them.

If a person does not toil in Torah, his heart will quickly cool off in his service of Hashem and he will no longer feel the need to observe the mitzvot; first the 'minor' mitzvot and then later even the 'major' ones.

Just as the Kohen Gadol would kindle the Menorah in the Beit Hamikdash every single day, so too a person must study the Torah, compared to the Menorah, and warm oneself by its light, every day and every hour, as the Torah instructs us (Devarim 6:7), "And you shall speak of them while you sit in your home, while you walk on your way, when you retire and when you arise."

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



## What is Required of a Good Leader?

### The Woman Who Triumphed Over the Admor of Nadvorna

"As a nurse carries a suckling." This is what Moshe Rabbeinu cried out to Hashem from the depths of his heart, describing the ideal, lofty characteristic that should be displayed by a leader.

A powerful saying expressed by the Sanzer Rov, author of *Divrei Chaim*, sheds light on this prominent quality: "When one loves the Father, one also loves His children!"

This attribute was a cornerstone of the admirable conduct of the Admor of Nadvorna zt"l, the Be'er Ya'akov. The *sefer Avihem Shel Yisrael* describes the love he felt for the Jewish people. Out of his great love for our Father, he loved every single one of His children in an exceptional way. Not for nothing were all sectors of Jews drawn to him. They felt in their hearts that he loves them sincerely and is prepared to do anything for them, proved by the hundreds and thousands of incidents where he aided even those who were not from his court and had no connection with his chassidut, only because he found out about their plight.

Anyone who asked for his help, or even his attention, received it generously. Even those others would avoid, he welcomed with open arms. His holy hands would caress the abscesses of their souls, cleaning and disinfecting, bandaging and healing. There was no wound he was not prepared to treat.

#### This Woman Triumphed!

He once expressed the following sentiment to a close attendant: "I am approached by wayward people and listen to them patiently, even answering and encouraging them, while just on hearing their words I feel they deserve to be thrown from the fourth floor. But I go down to their level..."

He added, "This story happened with my grandfather, the Holy Rabbi Meir'l of Parmishlan zy"a. A woman went in to see him and handed him a kvittel. The Holy Rabbi looked at the note and said, "Are you not embarrassed to give me a kvittel?!" The woman replied simply, "The Master of the World sees even more things and keeps quiet!" He later said that this woman won a victory over him.

A distinguished Jew from Bnei Brak attested that when his daughter became of marriageable age, a match was suggested for her with a boy from one of the Chassidic Yeshivot. However, he had no idea how to find out about the boy in question. Despite not being counted among his chassidim and only being slightly acquainted with him, his legs took him to Rabbeinu. Rabbeinu listened to his problem and told him, "Come back to me in two days and I will see what I can do. Even better, leave me your phone number." The next day the surprised father received a phone call from Rabbeinu, who identified himself and then proceeded to relate all the information he had found out about the boy.

Another clear demonstration of his love for others was apparent when he was asked advice about an errant individual, who was sentenced to imprisonment after being tried in court. After he had served part of his sentence, askanim debated whether they should try and get him released early. Perhaps it would be more appropriate for him to learn his lesson inside the prison walls.

When Rabbeinu heard about their deliberation, he determined the man's fate using an expression from Chazal (*Makot 23a*), "Since he was smitten he is considered as your brother." He declared, "He already received his blow; while we are obligated to help him return to normal life."

Not only did he demonstrate self-sacrifice when saving others from their troubles, but his devotion manifested itself even when it came to just somewhat lightening the darkness of someone's hardship for even a short time. Even when he knew he was unable to rescue the person from his fate, he still did not look away. He attempted to ease his load by offering words of encouragement and strengthening him with his pleasant countenance and warm words, just so he could make it even a bit easier for him to continue carrying his load.

#### Good Things One Does Not Push Off

Rabbeinu demonstrated another aspect of adding to a person's quality of life, through his custom not to delay relaying good news or helpful advice, and all the more so not tarrying with charity money that he could distribute sooner.

He was once told about someone from his court who was suffering terrible harassment and the chassid's distress caused Rabbeinu much pain. This chassid would regularly visit Rabbeinu, and he was actually supposed to come to see him that very evening. But that afternoon Rabbeinu preceded him by sending a messenger with a letter of encouragement, spreading a balm on his wounds. That evening, the chassid came to Rabbeinu and asked, "Rabbeinu knew that I was coming tonight, so why was it so urgent to send the letter already in the afternoon?" Rabbeinu replied simply, as if he did not understand the question at all, "If one can lighten the suffering of a fellow Jew two hours earlier, how could it be permitted to delay?!"