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

In the section of *Eved Ivri* (Jewish bondsman) the Abarbanel zt"l writes: "He shall work for six years and in the seventh he shall go free, for no charge.' The verse is clarifying that if, when he stole, his intention was to gain freedom from the burden of supporting himself and his family, he will leave emptyhanded. He will have nothing but the embarrassment and disgrace of having worked six years as a slave and then leaving without a thing, 'if he shall arrive by himself he shall leave by himself,' gaining nothing from his toil. And if he has a wife and he wished to place the burden of livelihood on his master, in the end he will leave together with his wife and the burden will return to him as previously. This is the meaning of 'his wife shall leave with him.'"

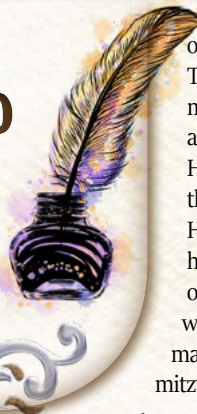
Even though the Torah is stringent with this servant who stole and thought that thereby he will be exempt from the burden of livelihood, the Torah has mercy on him and commands his master to treat him with honor and compassion. Chazal describe the extent to which the master must honor his slave: "If one purchases a Jewish bondsman it is as if he purchased a master for himself. He must be equal to him in all matters, with food, drink, and sleep. To what extent? If he has only one pillow, he must give it to the slave."

The master must treat him with respect and it is a mitzvah to send him away with gifts. The reason for this is as we are told (*Devarim* 15:15), "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt." Meaning, just as Hashem treated you with mercy and when you left Egypt gave you great wealth and spoil from the sea, you too must behave like this towards your slave. Another reason is so that the master should not become accustomed to treating others with derision. If he is forbidden to degrade his slave, all the more so he will understand that he must not degrade a free man.

But on the other hand, the Torah punishes the slave who does not want to subjugate himself fully to Hashem, shown by the matter of boring a hole in his ear by the door or doorpost. Rashi explains, "This ear that heard at Har Sinai, 'For the Children of Israel are servants to Me' and nevertheless went and acquired a (different) master for himself, must have his ear bored."

This servant apparently does not love Hashem; he

maskil  
Le'David  
Man is  
His Own  
Master



only loves his wife and children. Therefore, specifically by the mezuzah we bore a hole in his ear and hint to him that he must love Hashem, for mezuzah contains the words, "And you shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart and all your soul." Instead of taking those words to heart, he wants to remain a servant to his master and be exempt from many mitzvot written in the Torah.

When a servant blemishes even his hearing, one must make a hole in his ear so others will learn a lesson and they too will rectify this matter and let go of other enslavements, subjugating themselves to Hashem alone, like the rest of Bnei Yisrael who are servants to Hashem and His Torah, unencumbered by the Yetzer Hara.

Today's generation is blessed with many people who are returning to their roots and embracing a religious way of life. In a way, they are taking the lesson of the *Eved Ivri*. They are aroused by hearing words of *mussar* and rebuke that emanate from a pure heart and therefore make an impression on their own hearts, to the extent that they completely transform their way of life.

The section of *Eved Ivri* teaches us an ethical lesson. One who serves Hashem is considered like a master who rules over his Yetzer Hara. He must acquire a friend for himself as a permanent asset, as per the concept, "Either a *chavruta* or death." Chazal also say, "Accept a rav upon yourself and acquire a friend for yourself." The friend should become like a personal acquisition and one should remain connected to him throughout his life, not sometimes loving him and sometimes hating him.

One should make sure to stay connected with this close friend and also with other friends, for it is impossible to rely on just one friend - that friend may have to leave him if he moves to a different place, or because of other circumstances. And as the Chacham says, "Do not take lightly even one enemy, while even a thousand friends are not enough."

With the help of friends one can elevate oneself and progress in avodat Hashem and yirat Shamayim. "Cleaving to friends" is one of the forty-nine ways to acquire Torah. Just as Bnei Yisrael were united when they accepted the Torah and felt as one man with one heart, for a friend helps you connect to Hashem, so it should be throughout a person's life.

27 Shevat 5782  
29 January 2022

940

Shabbat Mevarchin  
Molad: Tuesday 3:07 and 16 parts



Hilula

27 Shevat – Rabbi Chaim Bardugo

27 Shevat – Rabbi Mordechai Zev Shulman,  
Rosh Yeshiva Slabodka

28 Shevat – Rabbi Chaim Nissim Abulapia,  
the Rishon Letzion

28 Shevat – Rabbi David Zindheim,  
author of *Yad David*

29 Shevat – Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel, the  
Alter of Slabodka

29 Shevat – Rabbi Tzion Sofer, author  
of *Neve Tzion*

30 Shevat – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Porush  
of Shaklov, talmid of the Vilna Gaon

30 Shevat – Rabbi Tzedakah Chutzin, author  
of *Meikitz Nirdamim*

1 Adar 1 – Benyahu ben Yohoyada

1 Adar 1 – Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Safrin Epstein

2 Adar 1 – Rabbi Yom Tov Algazi, author of  
*Simchat Yom Tov*

2 Adar 1 – Rabbi Yosef Dov Halevi  
Soloveitchik

3 Adar 1 – Rabbi Eliezer De Abilla, author  
of *Magen Giborim*

3 Adar 1 – Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, the Levush





## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### The Gemach that Saved from Death

Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen of Radin, known by the name of his sefer *Chafetz Chaim*, engaged in acts of chesed extensively throughout his life. It was a trait deeply ingrained in his soul and he went out of his way to assist others, both physically and financially. He was not satisfied until he sat down and wrote an entire sefer on this subject, and it is the duty of every Jew to strive to acquire this trait. He called this sefer *Ahavat Chesed*, and as its name implies, it instills in the hearts of its readers love for kindness and an idea of the enormous reward that awaits us in the Next World.

In one of the chapters the Chafetz Chaim deals with a common issue – lending objects and tools to other people, or borrowing between neighbors. This is what he writes:

“This type of kindness is something every person can fulfill, because it can be done even with simple things like a sieve, a funnel, and other household items. Our sages long ago said, “The punishment of (not wearing) white (tzitzit) is greater than the punishment of (not wearing) sky-blue,” because sky-blue is expensive and not every person can afford it, which is not the case with white. Here too, Heaven will not accuse man for not lending his friend the hundred dinars he required to get himself back on his feet, but will indict for something small he was able to lend and do him this favor, but did not grasp the opportunity.”

The booklet *Amud Hachessed*, an accompaniment to the sefer *Ahavat Chesed*, relates a telling story in which the Chafetz Chaim was involved:

There was a couple who had several children but unfortunately, they all died young. In his distress, the father approached the Chafetz Chaim and poured out his heart, asking for advice and a *segulah* for healthy children who will survive.

Rabbi Yisrael Meir answered, “I do not know of any *segulot*. But my advice is that you should establish

a *gemach* here in town, and then perhaps, in the merit of the kindness you do with others, Hashem will treat *you* with kindness and bless you with healthy children.”

The father heeded the Chafetz Chaim’s advice and immediately established a money-lending *gemach*. He also undertook that once every three years, during the week we read the section “When you lend money to My people,” he will arrange a *seudat mitzvah* for the townspeople, to strengthen the mitzvah of chesed.

Three years later he was blessed with a son and the *brit milah* fell exactly on the date set for the once-in-three-years *seudat mitzvah*! This was a clear sign that the father was blessed in the merit of engaging in chesed!

Over the course of time, he was blessed with several more healthy children, to everyone’s delight.

Eventually this person forgot about Hashem’s kindness, and one evening he approached the Chafetz Chaim and asked him to appoint a different trustee since he no longer had the time to invest in the *gemach* that had developed into a major undertaking. In addition, there were some who doubted his credibility.

At first the Chafetz Chaim refused, claiming that no one else would manage the *gemach* with his loyalty and dedication. But after much pleading, the Chafetz Chaim consented.

That very night a terrible tragedy occurred in the man’s house: One of his children choked to death in his sleep...

This calamity left no doubt in the heart of the bereaved father – it was only his involvement with chesed that breathed life into his children. He immediately decided to take back the management of the *gemach*.

The Chafetz Chaim concludes: “Therefore a person should take care to uphold this mitzvah and not grow lax with it.”



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

### Hidden by Humility

A woman once came to me and poured out her anguish; her family did not have bread to eat or water to drink. Her children suffered from cold, hunger, and thirst on a daily basis. As if to prove her words, her son suddenly appeared and cried out, “Mother, I’m hungry! What can I eat?”

I was extremely distressed to hear of her dire financial situation. I asked her, “There are various charity organizations in your neighborhood. Why don’t you approach one and ask for help?”

The woman lowered her eyes in humiliation. She related that she and her husband were too ashamed to let others know of their terrible poverty. They make every attempt to hide their true situation from outsiders. Although the family suffers, their dignity remains intact.

Of course, I tried to help her as best as I could. Afterward, I remembered Chazal’s words (*Vayikra Rabbah* 34:8), “More than the householder does for the pauper, the pauper does for the householder.” More than I assisted this family, I received from them. They taught me a vital lesson.

Just as this poverty-stricken family was prepared to undergo suffering, as long as they could hide the terrible hunger which was their lot, we should employ the trait of secrecy to keep our good deeds hidden from the public eye. We should not take pride in our accomplishments and certainly not broadcast them to the world. We should make every effort to conduct ourselves with humility and submission, as the Navi states (*Michah* 6:8), “What does Hashem ask of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your G-d.”



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### Principles and Pillars for Yirat Shamayim

**“And these are the ordinances that you shall place before them” (Shemot 21:1).**

Rashi explains that the conjunction ‘and’ indicates a connection to the previous chapter which describes the Ten Commandments. Just as those were given at Sinai, so were these ordinances.

However, would it enter anyone’s mind not to observe the laws delineated in this week’s Parshah, even if they were not said on Sinai?!

Rashi’s intention could be that he wanted to teach us man’s duty in This World. The Yetzer Hara tries to tempt man and distance him from observing the mitzvot, by telling him, “You are only obligated to observe those mitzvot that were said on Sinai. Anything else is not an obligation.”

What are these matters that were not said explicitly at Sinai yet must be observed? The fences and restrictions that the sages of each generation have established to keep man away from transgression, even in error.

This is what the Rabbeinu Yona warns us in his commentary on Avot (1:1), “‘Make a fence for the Torah,’ as it says (Vayikra 18:30) ‘You shall safeguard My charge,’ meaning make a safeguard for My charge. A restriction is something great and praiseworthy, to make a fence for mitzvot so the one who fears G-d’s word should not stumble. Therefore, he who fulfills rabbinic decrees, which are fences for the Torah commandments, shows more yirat Shamayim than one who performs a Torah command. Fulfilling a mitzvah is not the same proof of yirat Shamayim, as one who is careful with the restrictions so he shouldn’t come to sin. One who performs a mitzvah but does not abide by the restrictions, shows he is happy to do the mitzvah but on the other hand does not worry that he might sin. He is unafraid to break a boundary and ‘He who breaks down a wall will be bitten by a snake.’ These words of the sages are the basis for yirat Shamayim, the mainstay of the world, and the foundation for all virtues. And all the mitzvot are seasonings of it.”

## THE SABBATICAL YEAR



1. As we learnt, since *peiros shevi'it* are meant for consumption only, as it says (Vayikra 25:6), “The Shabbat produce of the land shall be yours to eat,” one may not trade with them. Only a small amount may be sold at a time, and the money must be used to purchase food. Included in the prohibition of trade, is the prohibition to use *peiros shevi'it*, or money received in exchange, to purchase clothes, utensils, land, or anything else that cannot be eaten.

2. Similarly one may not use *peiros shevi'it*, or money received in exchange, to pay a debt. One may also not use this money to pay membership to a *beit kneset*, or for a communal debt to charity.

3. *Peiros shevi'it* must not be used as payment for workers. But if the worker is your friend, and you feel comfortable asking him to do the repair as a favor, you may give him *peiros shevi'it* as a gift. As long as it is not paying a debt it is permissible. Of course, the worker must take care to treat the *peiros* with the appropriate holiness; not to cause them to go to waste, or trade with them, and do *biur* (renouncing of ownership) at the correct time.

4. If one transgressed and used *peiros shevi'it* to purchase a garment, in exchange he should set aside a certain food which acquires the holiness of the fruit. This fruit must be eaten before the time of *biur*. Similarly, if one transgressed and used *peiros shevi'it* for something other than consumption, for example he used Shemittah oil to soften skins, he must eat the worth of the oil in foods that have *kedushat shevi'it*.

5. The Torah permits purchasing live animals or birds with *d'mei shevi'it* since they can be eaten. However the sages forbid this, because if he decides to raise them, it will be hard to treat them with the appropriate holiness.

6. One may give *peiros shevi'it* as a gift, on condition that the recipient is informed so he will treat them with *kedushat shevi'it*. Also, knowing the gift comes from ownerless fruit will affect the measure of gratitude.

*For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.*



## Hagaon Rabbi Ovadiah Hadaya zt"l

In the city of sages and writers – Aram Tzova, Syria – Hagaon Rabbi Ovadia Hadaya was born to one of the country's greatest sages, the gaon Rabbi Shalom Hadaya. Rabbi Ovadia was a talmid chacham of stature, famous for his sefarim on halachah and aggadah. He later served as Av Beit Din in Yerushalayim.

Rabbi Ovadia culled most of his education from the narrow alleys of Old City of Yerushalayim. When he was a young boy of about five years old, his parents fulfilled their life aspiration and immigrated to the Holy Land, settling in the courtyards of the house of Hashem, opposite the site of the Beit Hamikdash and Holy of Holies.

Rabbi Ovadia studied Torah with immense diligence and devotion, abandoning all material and physical concerns. The words of Torah he studied were swallowed up in his blood and engraved on his heart with an iron pen. He fulfilled the verse: "Then

all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you."

An Arab Hajj served as the gate keeper of his father's neighborhood. Until late at night he would stand guard, protecting the residents from bandits and other harmful predators. That Arab Hajj once related that as long as the light burnt in the attic of Rabbi Shalom's house, where Rabbi Ovadia sat and studied, thieves were afraid to approach the area and did not dream of harming the residents in any way.

An interesting episode, associated with the name of Rabbi Ovadia, occurred during his stay among the Kabbalists at the Beit El yeshiva. Rabbi Ovadia always used to sign his name as two separate words: "עבד - יה"; this is also how he signed his name on the comments he wrote on the sefer *Simchat Kohen*, written by Rabbi Masoud Kohen Elchadad zt"l.

This practice continued until one Friday night when his grandfather, the gaon Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Levton zt"l, appeared to him in a dream and said: "You should know there is a great tumult in heaven, between the two there is ninety-one." He then stopped speaking and did not explain his words.

Morning arrived and Rabbi Ovadia was very troubled for he could not understand the meaning of the dream. Why was there a tumult in heaven? What is this "ninety-one"? He immediately went to ask the advice of kabbalists. Each one said something else but he was not satisfied with any answer.

When his father, Rabbi Shalom, heard about the dream, he pondered the matter for a while and then said, "My son, I will reveal to you the interpretation of the dream.

"The numerical value of the name עבדיה is ninety-one, the same as the numerical value of the combination of Hashem's Name's, ה-ו-י-ה and א-ד-נ-י (26 + 65). As we know, these two Names must be interconnected. By signing your name יה - עבד, as two separate words, you are separating Hashem's Names. It is this separation that arouses tumult in heaven, and is the meaning of 'between them is ninety-one.'"

His father's apt answer greatly moved Rabbi Ovadia. From then on, he began signing his name עבדיה, without separating what must be kept together...

This is the power of unity!

When his fame spread in the Torah world, the communal leaders of Petach Tikva asked him to serve as the city's chief rabbi. He then became famous as an exceptional Torah scholar, capable of ruling in all areas of halacha. Rabbis and Gedolei Torah from far and near began approaching him with questions of religion, halacha, and custom. Great talmidei chachamim began seeking his ingenuity with their questions on the revealed and hidden Torah, and he would answer them with marvelous alacrity.

On Shabbat Kodesh Parshat Yitro, 20 Shevat 5769, at minchah time, when Rabbi Ovadia sat at his table engaged in Torah as was his holy custom, his soul left him in holiness and purity. The numerous talmidim who mourned his death accompanied him on his final journey. He was accorded much honor and a yeshiva was established in his memory, may it be for a blessing.

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