



The superiority of an act performed by obligation

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years, and Jacob's days, the years of his life, were a hundred and forty seven years" (Bereishit 47:28)

Chazal say (Bereishit Rabba 86:2) that everything that happened regarding Yosef, such as the dreams, being thrown into the pit, being sold to the Yishma'elim, and afterward descending to Egypt, was orchestrated so that ultimately Yakov should descend to Egypt. The descent of Yakov to Egypt was the purpose, and everything that happened with Yosef was the means in order to achieve this end. It is necessary to understand, why did Hashem want Yakov to descend to Egypt, and did not allow him to die peacefully in Eretz Yisrael like his forefathers – Avraham and Yitzchak. And if the purpose of Yakov's descent to Egypt was for the slavery to begin, Hashem could have arranged that Yakov should remain in Eretz Yisrael, but just his descendants after him should descend to Egypt because of the famine. Since Hashem brought a famine upon Eretz Yisrael in the days of Yakov, and also orchestrated the sale of Yosef, it teaches us that Yakov's descent to Egypt was of utmost importance.

In the times of the wicked Greek kingdom, the purpose of the Greeks was to force the Jews to abandon their faith and make them forget the Torah of Hashem. So too in the times the Egyptian exile, the aim of the Egyptians was to cause Am Yisrael to assimilate and to adopt the Egyptian culture so that they would lose their Jewish identity. While in the days of the Greek kingdom many Jews adopted the Greek culture and assimilated among the gentiles, apart from a small handful of Chashmona'im, who eventually brought about the salvation for all the Jews, the Egyptians did not succeed in their scheme, and despite the fact that Am Yisrael fell for idolatry, they continued to maintain their uniqueness and avoided following in the ways of the gentiles by meticulously holding on to three principles; they did not change their Jewish names, their Jewish clothing, and their Jewish language.

The question arises: Where did Am Yisrael draw their strength from in the days of their exile in the defiled land of Egypt to keep their Jewish spark from being extinguished? The Torah had not yet descended to the world, and it seems as if there was no way for them to protect and shield themselves without the Torah.

It seems that Bnei Yisrael in the days of Pharaoh were able to preserve their uniqueness in the merit of the light and strength that Yakov provided for them when they descended to the land of Egypt. Therefore, even though Bnei Yisrael had not yet received the Torah, the holy forefathers and the heads of the Tribes, as well, learned the Torah transmitted from the days of Adam, and they sat and studied the Torah in the land of Goshen. Even though the slavery had not begun until

after the last of the Tribes died, in any case, the light and sparks of sanctity that were created from the study of Torah by Yakov and his sons granted Am Yisrael the strength and ability to maintain their Jewish identity, so that they would not become assimilated among the Egyptians.

This is also the answer to the question which we posed; why Hashem arranged for Yakov to descend to Egypt. It was clear before the Heavenly Throne that if not for the study of Torah by Yakov in the land of Egypt, which created sparks of sanctity within the vast darkness, the Jews would not have been able to preserve their identity, since they still had not received the Torah. Since the entire purpose of the slavery in Egypt was in order to purify and prepare Am Yisrael to receive the Torah and turn them into the Chosen People, Hashem arranged for Yakov to descend to Egypt so that he should study Torah which would protect and shield the Jewish people from assimilation among the gentiles. It was especially in the merit of those yeshivot which were established in the land of Goshen, where the Tribe of Levi continued to study Torah, and regarding this it is stated, "They shall teach Your ordinances to Yakov" (Devarim 33:10).

The study of Yakov Avinu was so precious and lofty in the Eyes of Hashem, because the light of Torah had not yet descended to the world, and only at the Giving of the Torah did Hashem reveal His Shechinah at Mount Sinai and bring down the light and sparks of sanctity. Therefore, the study of Torah without the Heavenly light was difficult and required much self-sacrifice. This is why the study of Yakov was so precious in the Eyes of Hashem.

According to the above, it would seem that during the days of the exile in Egypt, when Yakov Avinu and the Tribes were not commanded to study Torah, but did so out of their love of Hashem burning within them, the Yetzer Hara to shirk Torah study did not exist. On the other hand, during the reign of the Greeks, the Torah had already descended to the world, and therefore, the Yetzer Hara for shirking the study of Torah was overwhelming. The success of the few Chashmona'im in overcoming the darkness of the Greek culture and their evil scheme, which resulted in the victory and redemption, deserves to be celebrated and remembered until the end of all generations, as it is stated, "Greater is the one who is commanded and observes [the commandment], than he who is not commanded [but observes the commandment]."

Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 88 2643 3603 • Fax: +972 88 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashdod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orohaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il

Hillulah of Tzaddikim

12 - Rabbi Avraham Chiyun Author of "Torat Hashlamim"

13 - Rabbi Yitzchak Hoberman The tzaddik of Ra'anana

14 - Rabbi Refael Meir Panizel

15 - Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Rosenbaum The Admor of Nadvorna

16 - Rabbi Sa'adiah Shirian

17 - Rabbi Siluman Mutzafi

18 - Rabbi Zvi Elimelech Shapira Author of "Bnei Yissachar"



Walking in their Ways

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



Words of Our Sages

Gems on the Parashah From the Torah Sages

“G-d, before Whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, walked” (Bereishit 48:15)

The gaon Rabbi Eliyahu Diskin, shlita, quotes in his sefer “Nachal Eliyahu,” the words of the Vilna Gaon in his commentary on the Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, in the first paragraph. The Rama brings there the words of the Rambam in “Moreh Nevuchim”: “I have placed the L-rd before me constantly” – is a fundamental principle of the Torah and the virtue of the tzaddikim who “walk with G-d.”

“Virtues of tzaddikim” – as it is stated “Noah was a righteous man he was perfect in his generations; Noah walked with G-d.” Likewise, regarding Chanoch it is stated, “And Chanoch walked with G-d,” and also regarding the Avot: “G-d, before Whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, walked.” The Vilna Gaon concludes: This is the main virtue of tzaddikim.

We are told explicitly: You want to know who is a tzaddik? One who always walks before Hashem, and he personifies “I have placed the L-rd before me constantly.”

The greatness of our forefathers was that they were a “merkavah” for the Shechinah; they were a means for the manifestation of the Divine Presence, that is, they were constantly aware of Hashem. At all times and in every place they practiced, “I have placed the L-rd before me constantly.”

How does one achieve this?

The Chazon Ish, zt”l, once advised a yeshiva student who frequented his house how to forge an unceasing bond with Hashem. And so he said to him: Accustom yourself to ask for anything, whether big or small. In every matter, turn to Hashem and ask for His help, and also thank Him. In this way, you will ingrain in your soul the awareness of Hashem’s constant Presence, and your unceasing dependence upon Him. It is particularly important to turn to Hashem in small matters in which one may think that he can manage without Hashem’s assistance, G-d forbid.

It is told that Chassidim once heard Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz beseeching during the prayer of “Elokei netzor” that his maid should not quit. The listeners were convinced that there were deep mystical secrets behind his supplication, and therefore they asked him what his intentions were in his request. He said to them: Our maid wants to leave just now when my wife is not feeling well. Therefore, I asked Hashem that the matter should be resolved in the best possible way.

The Chassidim asked in amazement: For such a trivial matter the Rabbi beseeches Hashem in the Shemonah Esrei prayer? He explained: For this purpose prayer was instituted; so that we should ask for every single thing, even the smallest thing!

Let us imagine a great Rabbi who has a young son, and all the requests of the son from his father are only about spiritual matters. When the child needs a Chumash or Siddur, he comes to ask his father to buy them. He also occasionally comes to his father seeking guidance in matters of Torah and fear of Heaven. But he does not dare to ask his father for sweets and the like. Such a child certainly does not have a healthy relationship with his father! A healthy relationship means that he can ask him for little things as well. The same applies to our relationship with our Father in Heaven. Those who “walk with Hashem” and place Hashem before them constantly, always turn to Hashem at all times, and not necessarily during formal prayer.

Sizing up my faith

The following incident is a lesson in faith and trust.

The pasuk in Tehillim (9:11) says, “And those who know Your Name will trust in You, for You have not abandoned those who seek You, Hashem.”

The story took place on a Motza’ei Shabbat, when I was scheduled to fly to Brazil for a wedding at which I was asked to officiate.

I had planned to travel by train from Lyon to Paris, where I would take a connecting train to the airport. There, I would take a direct flight to Brazil. The trip was perfectly timed, and any delay might make me miss the wedding.

The only train from Lyon to Paris on Motza’ei Shabbat is ten minutes after Shabbat ends. Immediately after havdalah, I rushed out of the house to the train station, accompanied by Rav Elbaz and his brother.

As soon as I reached the train station, much to my dismay, I realized that I had taken my thirteen-year-old son’s hat instead of my own. It would certainly arouse attention, if not cause an outright chillul Hashem, were I to walk around in this too-small hat. I was very distressed by this and told Rav Elbaz that it seemed to be a sign from Heaven that I should not make this trip.

I must insert here that those who planned the wedding obligated themselves to conduct it according to Jewish law only if I would be there. My missing the train could have disastrous results.

Rav Elbaz’s brother spoke up. “Doesn’t the Rav always preach to us, day in and day out, about the importance of trust in Hashem?”

Aren’t we enjoined to place our trust in Him in every situation? Let us believe wholeheartedly that Hashem will send the Rav his hat, and we will make the train on time for the wedding.”

His words certainly planted seeds of hope within me, but I still didn’t believe that an actual miracle would occur. Skeptically, I turned to him and said, “Look, it’s already late. In another minute, the train is scheduled to stop here. How do you think I will manage to retrieve my hat in that short time?!”

Rav Elbaz suggested I phone my family and ask them to rush my hat to the train station. I followed his suggestion, although it seemed futile. By the natural order of things, there was no chance I would get my hat in time.

The train arrived at the station with a roar. I looked at it with a worried glance, whereas Rav Elbaz stood by calmly, certain it would wait for the hat to make an appearance.

For some unknown reason, the train stood in the station much longer than usual. It ended up waiting a full quarter of an hour, the exact amount of time it took for a member of my family to rush over and bring me my hat. I took the hat and, without waiting a second longer, jumped onto the train, just as its doors were about to close.

To this day, I cannot fathom how the most punctual train in all of France was detained for such a long time at one stop. But I am certain that it was in the merit of the faith of Rav Elbaz and his brother, who trusted in Hashem to send me my hat, so that I should arrive at my destination without delay.

The Haftarah

“And the days of David drew near that he should die”

(Melachim I, 2)

The haftarah tells of the death of King David and his last will addressed to his son Shlomo, which is similar to the parashah which tells of the death of Yakov Avinu, a”h, and his last will addressed to his son Yosef.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

One small detail

One small detail that many people transgress, unfortunately, for example; when there are members of the community who are recognized as poor people, and are in need of charity, but someone goes and spreads a rumor that they are really not poor at all; they are acting as paupers in order to deceive people. Ultimately, because of the rumor, they prevent people from providing them with their stipend, which they regularly receive.



Chazak U'Baruch

It is told about a Chassid that one day entered the room of the tzaddik Rabbi Avraham of Pshitnik, and asked him for a segulah to acquire fear of Heaven...

"I do not have a segulah for fear of Heaven," the Rabbi explained to him, "but if you want, I can give you a wonderful segulah for the love of Hashem!" Of course, the Chassid was very excited...

"And what is the segulah?" the Chassid inquired. He was sure he would be told a list of psalms of Tehillim to recite each day, or something of that sort, but the tzaddik answered simply:

"If you wish to love Hashem, you must first take upon yourself to love every Jew! If you will love every Jew unconditionally, and you will fulfill with all your might the commandment of the Torah, 'Love your fellow as yourself,' you will certainly attain the love of Hashem!" the tzaddik concluded.

Let us therefore abide by this fundamental principle, which is the means to elevate all of our Avodat Hashem to great heights. Let us love one another, and thereby reach loftier levels in the love of Hashem and continued greatness in all areas!

The famous yeshiva of Kelm produced countless eminent Torah scholars steeped in fear of Hashem. It was, and still is, the greatest model for the mussar movement. The striving for perfection to the "T" in the observance of mitzvot and in the development of virtuous character traits was the cornerstone of the Kelm ideal.

Can we imagine how the month of "Elul" looked in the yeshiva of Kelm? What dread of judgment they felt? What closeness to Hashem and what elevation! We are talking about very lofty levels, way above our understanding! How did erev Rosh Hashanah look in Kelm? Can we visualize it? The holy sanctity was almost palpable!

In fact, on erev Rosh Hashanah there was a custom in Kelm to accept upon themselves a resolution.

What resolution? Was it to pray with greater intensity, like a servant who beseeches his Creator with great devotion? Was it a resolution to learn more Torah, which included absolute dedication to its study without exception? Was it a resolution of fearing Heaven, by meticulously performing mitzvot, or abstaining from sin, or the like?

No! No!...

The resolution they took upon themselves on erev Rosh Hashanah, at the most lofty time, concluding all the achievements in their meticulous service of Hashem of the entire year, was a resolution to excel in fulfilling the commandment, "Love your fellow as yourself" by receiving every Jew with a shining countenance!

Precisely at this time, the Saba of Kelm, Rabbi Simchah Zisel Ziv, explained, when everyone is tense and afraid, anxious and fearful of the awesome Judgement, a person may accidentally frown or become impatient toward his fellow... and therefore, precisely at this time, it is most necessary to take upon oneself a resolution that will safeguard all the members of the yeshiva from this dangerous pitfall of hurting one's fellow, by greeting every person with a shining countenance!

Treasures

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



Menashe and Ephraim are considered Tribes of Hashem

"And now, [as for] your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt, until I came to you, to the land of Egypt they are mine. Ephraim and Menashe shall be mine like Reuvain and Shimon"
(Bereishit 48:5)

Yosef merited that his sons Menashe and Ephraim became one of the Tribes of Hashem, whereas the sons of the other Tribes did not.

It seems that it is because of the solid spiritual strength of Menashe and Ephraim, which they achieved despite growing up in the land of Egypt, a land filled with idolatry and immorality. They succeeded in maintaining their Jewish identity and adhering to the holy Torah. The other Tribes and their families grew up in the land of Canaan under the shadow of Yakov, who spread his Torah and spirituality. Therefore, Menashe and Ephraim, who engaged in the holy Torah and spoke the holy language, merited becoming one of the Tribes of Hashem, since it is not a simple thing at all to grow up and become a pure unblemished Jew, in an environment filled with abomination and immorality.

Yakov Avinu knew that Eretz Yisrael had to be divided into twelve sections, but the Tribe of Levi would not inherit property because Hashem was his property. Consequently, there was an extra property. When Yakov Avinu learned Torah with the sons of Yosef in the holy language, and realized that they had maintained their Jewish identity and continued going in the ways of their forefathers, he included them as one of the Tribes as a sign of appreciation and esteem. Thus, Menashe and Ephraim received the inheritance in place of the Tribe of Levi and in the place of Yosef, their father.

Yosef the tzaddik is not mentioned as one of the Tribes, but his sons are mentioned in his place. Yosef did not mind because generally a father is not jealous over his sons' success; in fact, he was overjoyed about it. I would like to suggest that perhaps because Yosef is not mentioned as one of the Tribes, he merited instead to become one of the seven exalted Ushpizin, who were a means for the manifestation of the Divine Presence.



Sacrificing relaxation for Hashem

“He saw a resting place, that it was good, and the land, that it was pleasant, and he bent his shoulder to bear [burdens], and he became an indentured laborer” (Bereishit 49:15)

If Yissachar saw that the rest is good, why did he consequently bend his shoulder to bear burdens and labor, which is the opposite of rest?

In the name of the “Ba’al HaSulam” it is told that when a Jew wishes to offer a sacrifice to Hashem, he must bring the choicest offering, as we find regarding Hevel that he brought the choicest offering, and Hashem accepted his sacrifice; whereas Kayin brought the worst, and Hashem did not accept it.

This was Yissachar’s approach, who wished to sacrifice his life to Hashem. He sought the best and most pleasant thing in life, which people greatly desire, and concluded that it was relaxation. Therefore “He saw a resting place, that it was good,” and said, “Master of the Universe, I hereby offer relaxation to you as a sacrifice,” and thereafter he “bent his shoulder to bear [burdens].”

Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan once met a person by the name of Chaim Cohen in the street. He promptly warned him, “I know that you plan to travel today by bus. Your bus will encounter a fatal accident and all the passengers will be killed. I advise you to donate some of your money for tzedakah, since ‘tzedakah saves one from death.’ In this way your life will be spared.”

“If what you say is true, then why doesn’t the honorable Rav warn all the passengers of the bus, so that everyone should be saved?” Chaim inquired of the tzaddik.

Rabbi Chaim explained, “None of the other passengers will believe me. Therefore, I am only telling this to you and offering you a way to save yourself.”

This is exactly what occurred on that day. The bus veered off a high cliff, and all the passengers were killed on the spot, except for Chaim Cohen, who was saved from death in the merit of the money that he gave for tzedakah

A Moroccan Jew purchased a bus in order to earn an income and provide a livelihood for his family. However, to his distress, the government rejected his request for a license to operate the bus.

One day, he met Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in the street. The man kissed Rabbi Chaim’s hand in respect, and tearfully poured out his heart: “I bought a bus in order to earn a livelihood, and I invested all my money to pay for it. But now, the government does not allow me to operate it. If I will not be able to use it, I will be destitute. I’ve lost all my money. What should I do?”

Rabbi Chaim suggested, “It says, ‘Tzedakah saves one from death.’ Chazal explain that ‘a poor person is considered dead.’ Donate money for the poor, and with Hashem’s help and mercy you will receive a license to drive the bus.”

The Jew accepted the tzaddik’s advice and gave Rabbi Chaim a sum of money for tzedakah. Then, he went on his way.

The next day, he received a message from the Motor Vehicle’s Department that he should appear at the office. When he arrived, the officers welcomed him pleasantly and informed him that his request had been approved. They issued him an authorized license on the spot.

This incident proves that “the will of those who fear Him He will do; and their cry He will hear, and He will save them.”