



Published by Mosdot "Mikdash Le'David", Israel

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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"ta

## maskil Le'David

### Detachment from Materialism — A Prerequisite to Accepting the Torah

**“Moshe arrived in the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain; and Moshe was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights”** (Shemot 24:18).

When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to Heaven, the angels wished to burn him, claiming, “What is this human being doing among us?” Hashem told Moshe to answer the angels’ claim. Moshe said, “Master of the World, I am afraid they will burn me with the vapor of their mouths.” Hashem replied, “Hold on to My Throne of Glory and answer them.” Moshe grasped Hashem’s Throne of Glory and thereby drew upon the strength to refute the angels’ claim (*Shabbat* 88b).

There are several things we need to clarify from this account. First of all, why was Moshe scared to answer the angels? He went up to Heaven on the command of Hashem, sanctifying himself and rising spiritually, reaching the level of an angel himself, so why was he afraid of them?

Secondly, why did Hashem not answer the angels Himself when He saw that Moshe was afraid? Instead, He told him to grasp the Throne of Glory and thereby receive inspiration to offer a suitable retort to the angels.

Furthermore, why did Moshe need to ascend to Heaven in the first place? Hashem could have given him the Torah down on earth in the Wilderness and this would have prevented the discussion between Moshe and the angels. Moreover, it is written about the Torah “It is not in heaven” (*Devarim* 30:12). In that case, why was it transmitted to Moshe on High?

Let us try resolve these difficulties. Hashem intentionally told Moshe to ascend to Heaven to

receive the Torah; He wanted Moshe to feel he is the “elite of creation” and therefore has no need to fear the angels. A Jew who clings to Torah and mitzvot rises to a very elevated level and is considered like an angel. Also, originally angels were created to serve and sustain man. This changed when Adam Harishon sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge and was expelled from Gan Eden. He descended in level and title to the extent that he was no longer considered the “elite of creation.” But Moshe Rabbeinu sanctified himself, separated from his wife, and did not eat or drink for as long as he remained on High, and thereby rose to the level of angels. He therefore had no reason to fear them. Moshe in his humility was not aware of his exalted level, so Hashem showed him that one who kills himself in the tent of Torah is comparable to the holy *ophanim* and *seraphim* (mystical angels). Hashem told Moshe to answer the angels himself. This was a message to Moshe and all future generations! A Jew must accustom himself to replying to angels and refuting their claim. After a hundred and twenty years we will ascend to Heaven. There we will hopefully receive favorable judgement, and mingle in the World of Truth together with the angels, but we will have to face their questions. By Moshe answering the angels himself, he gave over this power to all future generations.

Additionally, the Torah was especially given on High to symbolize the idea that materialism and earthliness are not compatible with Torah. Receiving the Torah requires man to detach himself completely from materialism and lift himself up considerably. Only in that way can the Torah reside within him. By Moshe abstaining from eating and drinking for forty days and nights he symbolized the importance of separating from materialism in order to accept the Torah.

This idea is so imperative that even the Ohel Mo'ed was not considered a holy or spiritual enough place for receiving the Torah since it was constructed from earthly materials. Hashem revealed Himself to Bnei Yisrael and gave them the Torah on a mountain, for a mountain symbolizes severance from earth and rising above materialism — a lesson about receiving the Torah for all future generations.

27 Adar 5786

14 February 2026

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Mishpatim

Parshat Shekalim  
 Shabbat Mevorchin



## Hilula

27 Shevat  
 Rabbi Chaim Bardugo

28 Shevat  
 Rabbi Vidal Angel,  
 Ra'avad Yerushalayim

29 Shevat  
 Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel,  
 the Alter of Slabodka

30 Shevat  
 Rabbi Meir, the Maharam  
 of Padova

1 Adar  
 Rabbi Tzedaka Chutzin,  
 author of *Meikitz Nirdamim*

2 Adar  
 Rabbi Ben Tzion  
 Hakohen Rabin

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





## PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

### One Gains More Than One Loses

**“If a man shall borrow from his fellow”** (*Shemot* 22:13).

The mitzvah of lending to others, writes the Peleh Yo’etz, is a great kindness: “Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.” Even if he sustains some loss from lending, he gains more than he loses from the reward that he receives from Hashem for his kindness. In addition, he will also be blessed by the borrower.

Every Jew should advise his wife to be kindhearted and purchase spare utensils for the home so she can lend them to others; we should not send people away empty handed – and Hashem will repay us sevenfold.

Included in the mitzvah of generosity is to be generous with one’s being, one’s wisdom, and one’s advice for the sake of helping any person who asks for assistance. One should not hold back any good he has to offer, and whatever one can give, be it a little or a lot according to his capabilities, should be offered pleasantly and generously. This gives pleasure to the Creator, and one will be repaid for his kindness.

### Fear of Death Saves from Death

**“Do not execute the innocent or the righteous”** (*Shemot* 23:7).

The Holy Ohr HaChaim *zy”a* explains that sometimes it is enough for a person to experience fear of death and through this alone he receives atonement for his sins; it is considered as if he died. Therefore, if the Beit Din rules that a certain person deserves the death penalty and just a moment before carrying out the ruling someone comes to his defense, he is taken back to Beit Din and judged with a favorable outcome.

This is hard to understand for the verse says “G-d stands in the Divine assembly,” meaning that the Beit Din receives *siyata d’Shmaya* to rule correctly. So if he has already been condemned, how can the ruling later be changed to his credit? The answer is that sometimes Hashem desires that the person should just suffer through the *fear* of death which will cause him to repent. He then achieves atonement and becomes worthy to live.

### Unnecessary Words Cause Harm

**“For every item of liability, whether an ox, a donkey”** (*Shemot* 22:8).

In the *sefer Kaf Hakohen* it is written that this verse alludes to the Mishna (*Avot* 1:17), “One who talks excessively brings on sin.” This is the meaning of “for every item” (דבר). “דבר” is also an expression for speech, meaning that one who talks excessively “is liable” – it leads to sin. But in particular “whether an ox, a donkey” refers to the gentile nations, who are compared to an ox and donkey. In contrast, concerning *talmidei chachamim*, even their nonspiritual talk is a lesson for us.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Delayed for a Blessing

A family from the Jewish community of Strasbourg, France was hit by tragedy. Their son was diagnosed with a dreaded disease and the doctors despaired of his recovery.

The despondent family and friends visited the grave of the *tzaddik* Rabbi Chaim Pinto *zy”a* in Morocco, where they prayed from the depths of their hearts for the recovery of this sick boy. Afterwards, R’ Mordechai Knafo, who always hosts me on my trips to Morocco, turned to the boy’s father and said, “Rabbi David Pinto *shlit”a*, grandson of Rabbi Chaim, is presently in the airport in Morocco. It would be worth your while to go there and ask for his blessing in the merit of his ancestors. Take with you a bottle of water for the Rav to recite a blessing, and with Hashem’s help you will yet see salvation.”

The boy’s father, a regular man with complete faith in the power of the *tzaddikim*, hurried to the airport. He offered a silent prayer that the flight be delayed so that he could meet me and receive my blessing. He finally arrived very close to departure time and all the passengers, myself included, were already seated on the plane.

When the father saw he had missed the opportunity he refused to surrender or despair. He begged the airline crew to allow him on the plane for a few moments, just to receive a blessing on behalf of his sick son.

With Hashem’s kindness, he managed to arouse the compassion of the airplane personnel – which was unexplainable and miraculous! – and they allowed him to enter the plane. They even delayed the plane for a few moments so that he could receive my blessings. It was something most unusual.

I blessed him wholeheartedly that his son should recover in the merit of my holy ancestors *zy”a*. With Hashem’s mercy, his son was completely cured. He merited setting up his own home and has three children, may there be many more!

There is no doubt that this man’s complete faith in Hashem’s power to heal his son and his trust in the power of *tzaddikim* to arouse Heavenly mercy, are what gave him the *siyata d’Shmaya* to be allowed on the plane and even delay the flight for the sake of his son’s recovery.

## WORDS OF THE SAGES



### What Will Prevent Thieves from Carrying Out Their Desire?

The Torah guidelines on how to treat a Jew who stumbles with the prohibition of theft, says HaGaon Rabbi Yosef Sholom Elyashiv *zt"l*, is something simply amazing. It is known that in every country throughout the world, where the law is defined according to non-Jewish rulings, harsh punishment is meted out to thieves. Sometimes the presence of only one witness is enough to pronounce them guilty, and this could even be a relative or someone prejudiced, and even circumstantial evidence is enough to punish. These severe rulings stem from a simple and rational supposition: if not for these punishments “a person would swallow his fellow alive.”

However, as far as we, the Jewish people, are concerned, the Torah tells us that a thief is only obligated to pay if there were two witnesses. And even in this case, if he admits the theft before the witnesses arrive, he is exempt from the fine. Besides, even if he was found guilty but doesn't have the means to pay, he is sold as a servant. And then, not only is he exempt from finding the money to pay, but he is now afforded a life of comfort! His master is obligated to feed him good food, just as he himself is accustomed to eating, and he must dress him in the same quality clothes that he himself wears. The “thief” has no financial concerns about supporting himself and his family.

One may wonder, “If this is the situation, what will deter the thief from stealing? How will we retain law and order in the world? People might prefer to steal and receive punishment of ‘he shall be sold for his theft.’ They are then freed from the burden of livelihood and able to live a comfortable life on the account of their master.”

But Harav Elyashiv points out something wondrous! The Torah is teaching us an important and fundamental point: the threat of punishment will not deter thieves from committing crimes; penalties will not stop them or help initiate change. On the contrary, the effective way to stop them from stealing is by treating them respectfully! The honor and sensitivity accorded to them together with the influence of good qualities in their master's home, seeing the Torah path followed along with faith in Hashem, is what will ensure law and order in the world! This is what will put an end to stealing! This is the Torah outlook on this topic.

The topic of the *Eved Ivri* (a Jewish bondsman) is, in fact, the classic example of good *middot*!

Hagaon Rabbi Michel Zilber *shlit"l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Zvhill, testifies about the conduct of Hagaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky *zt"l*, author of *Chazon Yechezkel*. He witnessed the special treatment which Harav Abramsky accorded his household help.

Every so often he would call her over in the middle of her work and tell her to rest. He also told her that in general, it would make him happy if she would work slowly and with ease, rather than exhausting herself by working quickly. This was his wish, even though working slowly meant he had to pay her more since she was paid by the hour.

This considerate conduct with which Harav Abramsky treated his domestic help certainly enhanced her view of a Torah way of life; she witnessed its pleasant ways. **This approach of treating people with honor, no matter their status, is what brings peace and harmony to the world.**



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### Torah is not in Heaven

**“Moshe arrived in the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain; and Moshe was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights”** (*Shemot* 24:18).

When Moshe ascended to Heaven, the angels rose up against him and asked, “What is this human being doing among us?” He almost lost his life, but he replied that he had come to bring the Torah down to Bnei Yisrael on the earth below, since the world cannot exist without Torah. When I read this Midrash I was most surprised. Just previously when Bnei Yisrael said, “We will do and we will obey,” the angels descended and placed two crowns on their heads, one for “we will do” and one for “we will obey.” If the angels did not want Am Yisrael to receive the Torah, why did they rejoice with them happily and adorn them with crowns? And if they truly rejoiced with them, why did they rise up against Moshe when he ascended to bring down the Torah?

The answer seems to be as follows: the angels' resentment of Moshe's arrival on High teaches us a powerful message. “The Torah is not in Heaven” and the place to study it is down on earth. Therefore, when Am Yisrael said “we will do and we will obey” the angels tied crowns to their heads and expressed their joy that the Torah had arrived at its true destination, the earth below, where it is supposed to be studied and fulfilled. But when Moshe ascended to Heaven, the angels thought he wished to learn Torah in Heaven. They wanted to kill him because Torah learning must take place on earth and not in *Shamayim*. When Moshe explained his goal of learning Torah from the Almighty in order to transmit it accurately to those on earth, they were appeased and left him alone.

Torah study is acquired in This World through toil, and our evil inclination tries very hard to stand in the way of our Torah study. The more difficult the struggle, the greater the reward! Torah acquired easily cannot be compared to Torah acquired with great toil and effort.

I once heard about someone who committed to dedicate two hours of his time to Torah study alone, without interrupting for business matters. One day someone approached during this time, offering him a business deal which could generate enormous profit if it took off. Our friend did not pay attention to the offer and continued learning diligently as if no one had interrupted. When the man offering the deal saw he was being ignored, he approached the man's wife and told her he was surprised at her husband's behavior. One had to be crazy not to grab at this opportunity with both hands! At the culmination of his study session, the husband looked up from the *sefarim* he was studying and told his wife, “You should know that this person who approached me was simply the *yetzer hara* disguised as a man. All he wanted was to test if I would stand by my commitment.” He added that if this was truly beneficial for their livelihood, Hashem would have brought it about at a different time, not specifically at the time he had dedicated to Torah study.

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



## Rebuke — A Sign of Love

This Parsha, which discusses numerous mitzvot between man and his fellow, illuminates the correct path that a Jewish person must follow. But it is not enough to walk confidently in the path of Torah, we must also enlighten and guide those who do not take the path leading to G-d, enabling them to repent and rectify their ways.

In fact, points out Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Margalit *shlit"á* in his *sefer Mapik Margalio*t, this is an amazing and surprising phenomenon. If you approach someone and point out that he has an ugly stain on the back of his shirt, will he be insulted? Definitely not. On the contrary, he will thank you wholeheartedly for kindly bringing it to his attention. He could have walked around with a big, ugly stain. You saved him from embarrassment and shame!

Taking this a step further, what if a person is about to eat something and I remark that the food will endanger his health? Will he be angry with me? Definitely not. He will thank me for protecting his health.

If so, why is it that when pointing out to someone that his conduct was inappropriate according to Halacha or *derech eretz* (ethical behavior), he immediately grows angry and begins to attack, "Who appointed you as my judge and police officer?!" Why is he so angry? The goal was simply to help him rectify his ways, to assist him in his spiritual quest by cleaning a stain on his soul — much more severe than a stain on one's shirt! So why do we immediately get uptight when hearing words of reproof? It would be more appropriate to accept his words with love and try to rectify our ways.

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel *zy"á*, the Ben Ish Chai, relates that there was once a lame man standing by the wayside. He was poor, tired, hungry, and thirsty. He stood with his arm outstretched trying to hitch a ride, but no one stopped for him. Suddenly a horse drew up next to him. The rider jumped down and asked him, "What can I do for you?" The lame man replied, "I am hungry and thirsty, I have not eaten for several days." The rider took out food and drink

from his bag, gave it to the unfortunate man, and waited patiently until he had satisfied himself.

When he finished eating, the rider was about to return to his horse and continue on his way. However, the lame man turned to him and pleaded, "One moment! Maybe you are travelling to such-and-such a town?" "Indeed I am," was his reply. "So maybe you can take me with you?" Being a great *ba'al chesed* the man agreed to take this lame man. He thought to himself, "If I sit up front and hold the reins with the lame man sitting behind me, he might fall because he does not have legs with which to hold onto the horse. So it will be better for the lame man to sit at the front and hold the reins and I will watch over him from behind, ensuring he shouldn't fall."

This was how they travelled, arriving safely at their destination.

When they arrived at the town square, the lame man turned around and addressed the owner of the horse, "Okay, we have arrived. Say thank you and disembark!" For a moment the horse-owner was simply astounded by this insolence, but then pulled himself together and shouted, "Ungrateful one, are you not ashamed!? What did I not do for you? I gave you food, I gave you drink, I took you to your destination while making sure that you sit in a comfortable and safe place on the horse, and now you are repaying me with evil for good?"

The lame person responded in kind, "You are the one who should be ashamed! I gave you a ride, brought you to town, and now you want to steal the horse from me, my single remaining possession?!"

Of course, crowds began to gather to listen to the interesting argument and immediately took the side of the lame man...

The benefactor saw that he had fallen into an evil trap and stated that he wished to approach the town's Rav, the Ben Ish Chai, and would accept whatever he ruled. The two went to the Rav and each one told over his version. The Ben Ish Chai, with his wisdom and sense of justice, realized

immediately that the owner of the horse was speaking the truth and the lame man was evil and dishonest, exploiting his handicap to achieve things deceitfully. He returned the horse to its rightful owner and sent the lame man away in shame.

But before taking leave of the owner he told him, "I will give you some good advice. Next time you pick up a hitchhiker, don't give him the reins. Don't allow him control!"

Human beings are made up of horse and man. We each have a materialistic part and a spiritual part. It is impossible to ignore the body; it exists, it is alive and kicking. It must be given its needs. But never give it the reins!

There are some "generous and good hearted" people who willingly give over the reins to the body. What happens eventually is that the body pushes away all spirituality and begins to control the soul too. We must never leave the reins for others to control, no matter what.

It is worth remembering: if someone remarks that a certain behavior of yours was inappropriate, we must overcome our immediate instinct, which is to object, defend ourselves, and ignore the criticism. It could be that the comment is in place and it could be that it is off the mark. Therefore it is worthwhile to pay heed to his words, and examine our ways. Maybe indeed he is correct, maybe there is truly something you have to rectify. The premise must be: On the contrary, I *want* to hear *mussar*! It is important for me to know how I appear in other people's eyes. It is difficult to see our own faults and mistakes.

One who loves others and cares about them will reprove them for their shortcomings. "For Hashem admonishes the one He loves." Offering rebuke is a sign of love! However, we must do so with much warmth and compassion, realizing that most people are not on the level to readily accept *mussar*. In most cases, a knowledgeable Rav should be consulted to assist in this matter. Sometimes the best approach is to daven for Hashem to help this person!



**"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"**

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