

# The Path To Follow

Vayakhel Pekudei 434

A Hevrat Pinto Publication

Under the Direction of Rabbi David H. Pinto Shlita  
www.hevratpinto.org | hevratpinto@aol.com  
Editor-in-Chief: Hanania Soussan  
32 rue du Plateau 75019 Paris, France • Tel: +331 48 03 53 89 • Fax: +331 42 06 00 33

Adar 23<sup>rd</sup>, 5772  
March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Rabbi David Pinto Shlita

## The Parts of Man Correspond to the Sanctuary

It is written, “Moshe assembled all the congregation of the Children of Israel and said to them: ‘These are the things that Hashem commanded, to do them’ ” (*Shemot 35:1*). We need to understand why Moshe assembled all of them here, rather than in another place.

The Ramban explains this as follows: “Thus Moshe, after having commanded Aaron and the leaders and all the Children of Israel – the men – all that Hashem had spoken to him on Mount Sinai, following the breaking of the Tablets and after he had put the veil on his face, again commanded that the people be assembled, whereupon the whole congregation gathered to him – men, women, and children. It is possible that this occurred on the day following his descent from the mountain, and he told all of them the subject of the Sanctuary which he had previously commanded, before the breaking of the Tablets. For since the Holy One, blessed be He, became reconciled with them and gave Moshe the second Tablets, and also made a covenant that G-d would go in their midst, He thereby returned to His previous relationship with them and to the love of their nuptials, and it was obvious that the *Shechinah* would be in their midst...even as He said: ‘They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them’ [*Shemot 25:8*]. Hence Moshe now commanded them all that he had been told at first.”

We therefore see that Moshe gathered all Israel only to tell them that the *Shechinah* would return to dwell among them. This is why he once again told them everything concerning the construction of the Sanctuary in every detail, for someone who relates something good to others usually goes into great detail by explaining just how good it is.

Even Hashem rejoiced over it, devoting four *parshiot* in His holy Torah (*Terumah*, *Tetzaveh*, *Vayakhel*, and *Pekudei*) solely to the Sanctuary, relating even the smallest detail of its construction two and three times over. The first time was when Moshe received the orders corresponding to it, the second time was when he spoke to the Children of Israel, and the third time was when the Children of Israel built the Sanctuary. Why so many times? It was in order to show the Children of Israel Hashem’s great love for them, the fact that He forgave them for the sin of the golden calf, and that He assured them that the *Shechinah* would return to dwell among them. Hashem wanted to show them that this was the goal of Creation, namely that He should have a dwelling place here below. In the Midrash our Sages say, “When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the World, He wanted to have a dwelling place in the world below, as much as in the world above” (*Tanchuma, Nasso 16*).

In any case, although Moshe brought the *Shechinah* back to earth again, the first time it dwelled on earth was not like the second time. The first time, Hashem’s dwelling below was similar to His dwelling above, and His glory filled the entire earth; it was not located in a single place. The second time, since the Children of Israel had sinned by making the golden calf, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: “On the day that I make My account, I shall bring their sin to account against them” (*Shemot 32:34*). Hence they lost their crown, and the *Shechinah* dwelled only in the Sanctuary. How can we say that initially G-d wanted to make

the *Shechinah* dwell among the Children of Israel themselves, and not just in the Sanctuary? It is from what is written at the beginning, “They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them,” for it is not written “in it,” but “among them.” When G-d ordered Moshe that the Children of Israel should make a Sanctuary, He wanted to reside within each of them, not just in the Sanctuary. Hence it states “among them,” for they had not yet sinned. Once they had sinned, it is written: “The Children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horev” (*Shemot 33:6*), and in the Aggadah we read: “When the Children of Israel joyfully accepted the kingdom of Heaven and said, ‘All that Hashem has said, we will do and we will hear’ [*Shemot 24:7*], the Holy One, blessed be He, immediately told Moshe: ‘Speak to the Children of Israel, and let them take an offering for Me’ [*Shemot 25:2*]” (*Tanna D’vei Eliyahu*).

This is why Moshe gathered all Israel here, rather than in another place, since the *parsha* of the Sanctuary had only been given to the Children of Israel so they could learn to sanctify themselves and become a miniature Temple worthy of the *Shechinah*. He therefore gathered them all, for the Sages have said that one who hears admonishments from the teacher is not like one who hears them from the student. If the Children of Israel could have heard the entire Torah and all the *mitzvot* from someone else – even though they did not hear everything from Moshe himself – he had to gather everyone so they could hear these words of admonishment from the mouth of the teacher, not from the mouth of the student (see the sermons of the Chatam Sofer).

### Though the Righteous One May Fall...

In the Aggadah we read, “To all that the Holy One, blessed be He, created in man, He created a parallel on the earth” (*Kohelet Rabba 1:9*). We may say that the Holy One, blessed be He, created the brain of man, where his soul resides, in parallel to the Sanctuary and Temple on earth, where the *Shechinah* resides, for our Sages have compared the soul to the *Shechinah* (*Berachot 10a*), and man’s soul is a Divine spark. He created man’s heart to correspond to the Holy Ark, where the Tablets and Torah were placed, for the Sages speak about a discerning heart (*Berachot 61b*). Since different parts have been created in man, this teaches us that the Sanctuary is similar to man: Just as the Sanctuary could be taken down and reassembled at each stage, and just as the Children of Israel journeyed at each stage, likewise man must journey in this world and look at what has been created in the world that corresponds to his brain and heart, which is the Sanctuary, and each day he must spiritually grow. Although he sometimes fails and does not overcome trials, he must still strengthen himself in the service of Hashem, for “a man does not fully understand the Torah’s words until he has stumbled over them” (*Gittin 43a*). As King Solomon said, “Though the righteous one may fall seven times, he will arise” (*Mishlei 24:15*). This is like the Sanctuary, which was constantly being taken down and put back up.

The Torah speaks at length about every detail of the Sanctuary because these *parshiot* were given only in comparison to man, who is like the Sanctuary, so he can learn from them. The Torah did not write anything about the Temple, for it is the Sanctuary that is similar to man. When a person sanctifies himself in this world, he becomes like the Sanctuary and the *Shechinah* dwells in him.

### The Highest Ranking Officer

It is written, “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day shall be holy to you” (*Shemot* 35:2).

World War I cut off all commercial routes to Eretz Israel, and the small Jewish settlement there suffered from hunger. Bread, water, fuel, and medicine were rare and costly.

Rabbi Yosef Levi Hagiz *Zatzal* was among the greatest buyers of land in Eretz Israel. He was a wealthy and truly pious man, one with a great sense for business. Although he bought and sold paper products, he also owned fields and other property throughout the land. When widespread poverty reached Jerusalem, he moved to Jaffa, where he had an office. From time to time he would go around and examine his properties.

One Shabbat morning, in Rabbi Yosef Levi’s orange grove near Petah Tikva, the Arab custodian opened his eyes at sunrise and heard the sounds of approaching horses. He immediately got on his horse and went to the entrance of the field as he loaded his weapon.

A group of Turkish officers, all in uniform, appeared before him. Something in the heart of the custodian told him that they were up to no good. The few polite words that the officers exchanged with him were not reassuring. “We’re on a routine visit,” said one of them. At that point they got off their horses and began to measure the length and width of the orchard, exploring its smallest corners. “Someone must have denounced the landowner to the authorities,” thought the faithful custodian.

The call of one of the officers made his heart beat faster. Standing next to an old and deep well, he pointed to something with his finger. A few minutes later, they took out dozens of closed wooden crates from the bottom of the well. When the first crate was opened, they discovered two 20-liter tanks. The strong odor that they gave off betrayed their contents – it was fuel!

At the time, possessing more fuel than allowed by the authorities was an extremely grave crime, and having such a large quantity of valuable material was punishable by death.

With the start of the war, Rabbi Yosef Levi understood that all kinds of businesses would go bankrupt. He therefore invested an enormous amount of money into purchasing fuel, for he understood its importance and necessity both in times of war and peace. Only he and his faithful custodian knew of the existence of the fuel supply.

The eyes of the leader of the Turkish officers were blazing. “The man is liable to death,” he hissed between his teeth. “Summon him immediately!” he ordered the custodian, whose entire body was now shaking. However he knew his master well, and with a timid voice he replied: “Today is the Sabbath of the Jews, and the owner is in Jaffa. He will not desecrate the Sabbath to come here.”

“If that’s the case, he’ll die twice. Once for having stored this fuel, and a second time for having disobeyed my order,” replied the officer, who was now foaming at the mouth. “Hurry up and go! Relay my orders to him. I and my men will wait here until he comes!”

Rabbi Yosef Levi was stunned to hear the terrible news which the custodian brought him, but he refused to consider desecrating Shabbat even for an instant to obey the Turkish officer. The custodian also preferred to wait with his master, so as not to become the victim of the officer if he returned alone.

It was only after Shabbat, after having said *Havdalah*, that Rabbi Yosef Levi mounted his horse and traveled to his orchard. The Turkish officer and his battalion were no longer there, and Rabbi Yosef remained and slept in the custodian’s cabin.

At dawn on the following day, the Turkish officer and his men appeared, and his face was red with anger upon seeing the Jew. It was clear that he was holding himself back with great difficulty from shooting him immediately. However he managed to control himself somewhat, demanding an explanation for Rabbi Yosef Levi’s insolent refusal to present himself on the previous day.

Rabbi Yosef Levi was a proud Jew, a man of high society who had already experienced many unfortunate incidents in his life.

He said in his own voice, “Your orders are very important to me, and I certainly do not scorn them. However another officer, with an even higher rank, ordered me not to leave my house yesterday.”

The Turkish officer was confused for a moment, and he looked at the Jew without understanding what he meant. Rabbi Yosef Levi took a deep breath and explained: “Our Torah commands us to rest on the Sabbath day, and not to perform any work. As everyone knows, we received our Torah from G-d, and therefore I cannot transgress His orders, for He is the highest ranking officer in the world, is He not?”

The simple yet sharp words of the Jew disrupted the Turkish officer. Something in his appearance softened. A moment later, he angrily asked: “And what about this fuel – did you also receive G-d’s order to collect it?” Rabbi Yosef Levi did not lose his composure: “Indeed I did. All this fuel was collected a very long time ago. I hid it so it could be used to help the poor and needy, those who do not have the means to purchase fuel to cook their food and heat their homes. You understand that helping the poor is an order from G-d.”

The Turkish officer was now even more confused. He started to think that the Jew standing before him was telling the truth, just as he had proved in regards to Shabbat, for he did not hesitate to risk his life in order to observe a religious commandment. In the end, the officer was content on confiscating the fuel, without punishing Rabbi Yosef Levi himself.

What is interesting is that Rabbi Yosef Levi had another stash of fuel, one that was not discovered. Following this incident, he decided to put into practice what he had told the officer.

That fuel, which had initially been destined for business use, was henceforth distributed to all the poor and sick who needed it, those who could not purchase fuel themselves.

## Guard Your Tongue!

### One Who Disparages a Talmid Chacham in Our Days

The evil inclination incites a person to think that the law regarding one who disparages a *talmid chacham* only applied in the era of the Gemara, when there were very great scholars, but not in our time. This is a grave mistake. Every *talmid chacham* is measured according to his generation, and even in our time if a man studies Torah and can make *halachic* decisions, he is called a *talmid chacham*. Whoever denigrates him – even in regards to unimportant things, and even outside of his presence – commits a grave sin and deserves to be excommunicated.

– Chafetz Chaim

### Proclaim

It is written, "Moshe commanded that they proclaim throughout the camp" (*Shemot* 36:6).

What exactly was proclaimed throughout the camp?

The Gemara replies, "Do not take out and bring from your private domains to the public domain [on Shabbat]" (*Shabbat* 96b).

Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua *Zatzal*, the author of *Pnei Yehoshua*, asks why Moshe warned the Children of Israel against taking something outside only after they had brought an offering to the Sanctuary.

He replies that when Moshe saw that there were "100 *kikars*" of silver for the sockets (*Shemot* 38:25), he realized that the Children of Israel numbered 600,000, since 100 *kikars* of silver was equal to 600,000 half-shekels (Rashi on *Shemot* 38:26). From then on, there was a prohibition against moving something from the private domain to the public domain.

This is why Moshe commanded that a proclamation be made throughout the camp regarding the prohibition against moving something from the private domain to the public domain.

### Only Betzalel

It is written, "Betzalel made the Ark" (*Shemot* 37:1).

Concerning the other vessels of the Sanctuary, it is not said "Betzalel made." Instead we read: "He made curtains of goats' hair for the tent," "he made boards for the Sanctuary," "he made the middle bar," "he made the Table," "he made the Menorah," and so on. It is only here, with the building of the Ark, that Betzalel's name is explicitly mentioned: "Betzalel made the Ark."

Why?

The *gaon* Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk (author of the Torah commentary *Ohr Somayach*) explained that all the other vessels were eventually replaced by newer ones made during the period of the First and Second Temples. However the Ark of the Covenant was never remade, since it was hidden and nothing replaced it.

This is why the verse says, "Betzalel made the Ark," teaching us that it was made only by Betzalel.

### In the Image of a Child

It is written, "He made two cherubs of gold" (*Shemot* 37:7).

This is surprising: Why did each cherub possess the face of a child, rather than the face of a *tzaddik* or an angel?

The book *Maskil el Dal* explains this according to the teaching of the Sages that "precious is man, for he was created in the image [of G-d]" (*Pirkei Avot* 3:14). Rabbi Chaim Vital writes in the name of the Arizal that even a non-Jew who was just born is made in the image of G-d. However when he grows up and sins, this image leaves him, just as it leaves a Jew when he sins.

Before he grows up and sins, the image of a child is that of G-d, and it is this image that was chosen to be upon the Ark of the Covenant. This is a sacred and pure image, one engraved beneath the Throne of Glory.

The Zohar gives a *segula* for someone with a bad temper: Let him look at a young child, for then his anger will diminish. This is because a child's image possesses the sanctity of G-d's image, being able to influence man, lead him towards the good, and appease his anger.

### Allusions

It is written, "When they came to the Tent of Meeting and when they approached the Altar, they would wash" (*Shemot* 40:32).

In his book *Peleh Yoetz*, Rabbi Eliezer Papo explains this verse by way of allusion:

"When they came to the Tent of Meeting" – this is the synagogue.

"When they approached the Altar" – this is the table, which is similar to the Altar.

"They would wash" – meaning that they would perform *netilat yadayim* before praying and sitting down to eat.

## In the Light of the Parsfa

### Whoever Adds – He Takes Away

It is written, "Moshe said to the Children of Israel: 'See, Hashem has proclaimed by name Betzalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah. He filled him with the spirit of G-d, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge, and with every craft'" (*Shemot* 35:30-31).

Let us think about this: Was the Sanctuary built upon Betzalel's orders? It was only built by G-d's word, so what kind of wisdom was needed for this?

To what can this be compared? It is like a scribe who wants to build a palace for himself. He will not go and build it according to his own views, but according to the views of a designer, and the designer will not build it according to his own views, but according to the plans and notes in his possession on how to build a room here and a room there, a window here and a door there. However no wisdom is needed for a designer to borrow the plans and notes of a colleague, since he is simply following orders. Likewise Betzalel did not make things according to his own views, but according to the word of G-d, Who told Moshe how he should undertake the work. Therefore what kind of wisdom was needed for this? Even the most inexperienced apprentice knows how to drive a nail into wood, and only the originator of construction plans is called wise!

Our Sages have said, "How do we know that whoever adds [to G-d's word] takes away [from it]? From the verse, 'G-d has said, 'You shall not eat of it [the Tree of Knowledge], neither shall you touch it' ' [*Bereshith* 3:3]" (*Sanhedrin* 29a). Rashi explains that the Holy One, blessed be He, had not prohibited the touching of the Tree of Knowledge. Yet because Adam and Eve added to His word, they took away from it, for the serpent pushed Eve against the tree and made her touch it, at which point it said to her: "See! Just as death did not ensue from touching it, so will it not ensue from eating of it." We find something similar concerning Saul: "Saul said, 'I have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people took pity on the best of the sheep and cattle in order to bring them as offerings to Hashem your G-d, but we destroyed the rest'" (I Samuel 15:15). Saul wanted to outsmart G-d's orders, and he added to G-d's word. What did the prophet Samuel tell him? "Does Hashem have as much delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Hashem? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen is better than the fat of rams, for rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is like iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Hashem, He has also rejected you from being king" (vv. 22-23).

As a result, Betzalel's wisdom consisted of the fact that he did not add anything to Hashem's word. Although he could have changed something here or there in accordance with his own ideas, he refrained from doing so. That was his glory. Although he put the Sanctuary before the vessels, he did not do so according to his own views, but according to Hashem's orders. Thus Moshe said to him, "You were in the shadow of G-d [*betzal E-L*]" (*Berachot* 55a).

From here we learn that every person must realize that he is forbidden to add to Hashem's word. He must simply act wholeheartedly, as it is written: "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d" (*Devarim* 10:10). Our Sages teach, "If you have done everything that is commanded in regards to something, then you are wholehearted with Hashem your G-d" (*Sifrei, Devarim* 173). A person is only called wholehearted when he fulfills G-d's will, without adding or taking away from it. When does he have the right to add? When he changes nothing within Hashem's word, but adds to it. However if he modifies Hashem's word in order to add to it, then it is said: "Whoever adds – he takes away."

Our Sages say in the Midrash, “The Torah said before the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘It is written, “At its left, wealth and honor” [Mishlei 3:16]. Therefore why do the poor exist?’ The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: ‘That I may cause those who love Me to inherit wealth’ [ibid 8:21]. Why are there poor people in this world? In order for them not to occupy themselves with other things by forgetting the Torah” (*Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei 3:534*).

Among the stories concerning leading Torah figures, we find impressive descriptions of how these great men of Israel lived. Although they experienced tremendous poverty and lived with a bare minimum of material possessions, they were content with less than little in order to merit the crown of the Torah.

(Note: We know what the book *Turei Zahav* says about those who learn Torah in comfort and without having to put an effort into it – their learning does not endure.)

### I Rejoice in a Piece of Dry Bread

It is said that the *gaon* Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky *Zatzal* (who served as the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem near the end of his life) moved out his parents’ home with his brother to study Torah at a yeshiva. His years of learning took place amid great hardship, as he describes:

“When we arrived at the yeshiva, we were content with two meals a day, meager meals that were barely able to sustain the body. Yet afterwards, we decided that twice each week, we would spend the little money that we had to eat lunch at an inn so we could have energy to learn Torah.”

This lack of food was felt throughout Rabbi Yosef Tzvi’s body, to the point that he was afflicted with tremendous weakness. At that point, the brothers decided that Rabbi Yosef Tzvi should eat lunch regularly, so that he would not neglect Torah due to weakness. However after about 15 days, they no longer had any money left, and were forced to use the money meant for them to travel back home with. At the same time, the One Who governs circumstances made money from an unknown source reach them, money that was sufficient to pay for their meals for an additional month.

In gratitude to the kindness that Hashem had shown them, Rabbi Yosef Tzvi vowed to devote an extra hour to learning Torah each day, an hour taken from his time for sleep.

What follows is an extract from a letter that he sent to his father in 5643, a letter that speaks for itself:

“What you wrote, that you would send me money when I need it, dear father, is something that I spoke about with you, saying that even if we don’t have fresh bread, meat, or delicacies, I would rejoice in a piece of dry bread and in my learning. The one who wishes you health, your son.”

### Hunger Didn’t Bother Me at All

The book *Hamoreh* describes the life of the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, the *gaon* Rabbi Ezra Attiya *Zatzal*, who was able to revitalize Torah learning among the Sephardic community of Jerusalem after the destruction of the old city. It is said that even as a very young man, his soul yearned for Torah as he was constantly spurred on by love. Both night and day, he isolated himself in the famous Shoshanim LeDavid Beit HaMidrash, outside the city walls, content with some dry bread that he dipped

in salt, with water in small measure, with sleeping on the benches of the Beit HaMidrash, and with learning Torah. Through his tireless devotion, he succeeded in learning numerous tractates along with their commentaries.

Near the end of his life, he told one of his students: “When I was young, I learned Torah in poverty. His kindness to us was great, and my mother and I enjoyed an entire pita. Sometimes we were given an egg to eat, and we shared it – half for my mother and half for me. Hunger didn’t bother me at all!”

Similar things were said about the kabbalist and *gaon* Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi *Zatzal*. In the years following his arrival in the Holy Land from Yemen, he was forced to move several times within Jerusalem. At a certain point, he lived on Yosef Chaim Road. His apartment was extremely modest, a small room adjacent to the Rahamim Banah synagogue. There was neither sun nor air in his apartment, but a small outside corner kitchen and communal toilets for all the residents living around the courtyard.

Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi paid no attention to his difficult living conditions, and had absolutely no interest in material pursuits. He was completely immersed in plumbing the depths and complexities of the Zohar and other books of Kabbalah. For most of the day, he would fast because of his diligence. When he did eat, he was content with a bit of bread and some water. As such, he devoted all his energy and strength to growing in Torah learning and teaching.

### Those Who Serve Hashem

At the beginning of World War II, after the Nazis had conquered Poland with lightning-quick speed, news spread concerning the pact between Germany and Russia in regards to the city of Vilna, which was to come under the jurisdiction of Lithuania, which had miraculously remained independent.

In light of this fact, mass numbers of yeshiva students began to flock towards Vilna. Close to two thousand students along with their rabbis left Poland (from the cities of Mir, Kamenitz, Lomza, Kobrin, Radin, Slonim, and Lublin), risking their lives to secretly cross the border to Vilna. They did so knowing perfectly well that only there, in Vilna, could they continue growing in Torah.

As a result, Vilna was inundated with thousands of yeshiva students who suffered from tremendous poverty. Not only did they lack food and the most basic of necessities, they also had no accessible place in which to sleep.

A Jew from London, who happened to be in Vilna at the time, wrote to the editorial department of the newspaper *HaPardes*, describing the terrible situation in the city:

“On Shabbat, I found them eating soup with dry bread. They slept 50 at a time in every Beit HaMidrash and synagogue – which were frozen because they were not heated – sleeping without pillows or covers. They were gaunt and pale, their appearance testifying to the hardship and misery into which they had been plunged.”

The narrator continues, but interrupts his description of their material conditions with a magic word: “But.” It is a single word that separates things like east from west, like light from darkness.

“But! Everywhere they find themselves, they are learning. Since there are not enough sacred books, there are five students to each page. They listen to lectures with incredible vitality. Misery, cold, and hunger are far from their minds. I say with a loud voice: Those who serve Hashem are astounding. They study as usual, and on the contrary, they strengthen themselves even more!”