

Derech Ha-Rif

Teachings of the Admor Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto, Shlita
Parshat Shemot | Issue 112 | 21st of Tevet 5786



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A person who possesses the attribute of patience can defeat and subdue the Evil Inclination and every difficult thing.

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto Shlita

First Meal: The Power of Patience

"And Moses grew and went out to his brothers and saw their burdens" (Exodus 2:11)

Derasha

One of the primary traits a Jew must work on in this generation is patience (Savlanyut). It is said that what the mind cannot do, time will; patience is one of the most important things in this generation. If a person does not work on their patience, their life is not truly a life.

We see this in the weekly Torah portion regarding Moses: "And he saw their burdens." Our Sages say: do not read it only as "their burdens" (Sivlotam), but as "their patience" (Savlano-tam). The Children of Israel were extremely patient throughout the entire period of enslavement in Egypt. Despite all the harsh decrees Pharaoh enacted—the torture, the pain, and the most degrading labor—they conducted themselves with patience rather than impulsivity. They held themselves together with great endurance. G_d saw how they accepted everything with patience and had mercy on them.

The Gemara (Eruvin 54b) tells of Rabbi Perida, who had a student who required a lesson to be repeated four hundred times before he understood it. One day, Rabbi Perida had to leave for a specific matter; he taught the student the usual 400 times, but the student did not grasp it. Rabbi Perida asked what had changed. The student replied, "From the moment they told the Rabbi he had to leave, I was afraid the Rabbi would depart, and I couldn't concentrate." Rabbi Perida said to him, "Concentrate now, and I will teach you another four hundred times." A Heavenly Voice (Bat Kol) called out and gave him a choice: "Do you prefer that four hundred years be added to your life, or that you and your entire generation merit the World to Come?" Rabbi Perida chose the latter. The Heavenly Voice then announced: "Both you and your generation shall merit the World to Come, and you shall also be granted a long life."

We see a great principle here: in Rabbi Perida's generation, there were certainly people who did not behave well, yet through the power of Rabbi Perida's patience, he merited the salvation of his entire generation.

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The Spirit of the Rif: The Days of Shovavim

A person with the power of patience has the greatest strength to subdue the Evil Inclination. Nothing can stand before the power of patience.

Similarly, the Gemara (Eruvin 13b) states that Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disputed for three years until a Heavenly Voice declared: "Both these and those are the words of the Living G_d, but the law follows Beit Hillel." Why? Because they were pleasant and humble, and they would study the words of Beit Shammai before their own. Often, when arguing, a person lacks the patience to listen to others. However, Beit Hillel listened to the reasoning of Beit Shammai first. One must strengthen themselves with all their might in the trait of patience, for through it, one can ascend to the highest levels of holiness.

These days are the period of "Shovavim" (an acronym for the Torah portions of Shemot, Va'era, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim). This is a time when the "Samael" (the angel of Esau) has power, which is why we read about the enslavement and the redemption. It is a time for a person to rectify the "Attribute of the Foundation" (Middat HaYesod - personal purity).

Reading the Torah during these weeks awakens the potential for redemption. Just as Israel left the 49 gates of impurity and ascended toward the 50 gates of holiness, we too must work on ourselves during Shovavim to rectify the "288 sparks" and emerge from impurity into holiness.

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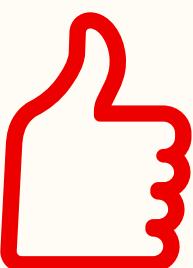
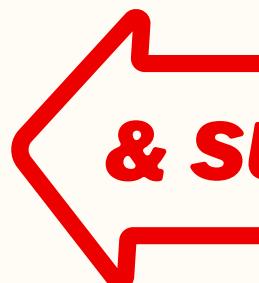
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A person must be like the Earth—receiving everything from the Creator with love and joy.

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto Shlita

Second Meal: Acceptance and Humility

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus 1:7).

Derasha

We must ask: if the Children of Israel were fruitful and multiplied in such great numbers, it is obvious the land would be filled with them. Since there are no redundant words in the Torah, what is the meaning of "And the land was filled with them"?

Our Sages ask: why is the earth called "Eretz"? Because when G_d created the world, every element had complaints. The sea complained it was too low; the heavens complained they were too high. Only the Earth accepted its lot with great joy. The Earth's "joy" is that even though people step and walk upon it, it accepts this because it is G_d's will.

This is a fundamental principle: a person must accept everything G_d does with love. The verse can be interpreted as: the Children of Israel in Egypt did not complain. They prayed, but they did not complain. Like the Earth, they accepted their judgment without protest, and thus "the land [the quality of the Earth] filled them"—they gained the strength to accept G_d's will.

Outreach Through Humility

Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11).

One who wishes to bring people closer to G_d must behave with humility and simplicity.

When G_d asked Moses to redeem Israel, Moses noted a paradox. To deal with Pharaoh, one must be ready for conflict and dispute. But to take the people out of their "low place" and bring them closer, one must use a "soft tongue" and gentle speech.

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These are two opposites: a person who fights cannot easily draw people close, and a person who is gentle might struggle to fight. Moses needed a special promise from G_d that he would be granted both strengths. To redeem people from the depths, one must descend to their level with humility.

Q&A with the Rif

Question: Why do I have a constant internal desire to "enjoy life"—food and other pleasures? I understand I have responsibilities to my family, but if I don't satisfy these desires, I fall into sadness. How can I control this?

Answer: One must know the Talmudic principle (Sanhedrin 107a): "The Evil Inclination is like a guest—if you satisfy it, it remains hungry; if you starve it, it becomes satisfied." The more you indulge your desires, the more they will demand. You must "starve" the inclination. Do not fulfill its every wish. It will be difficult for a period, but eventually, it will calm down and stop pressuring you. If you follow your desires, they will lead to destruction and the loss of everything you have.

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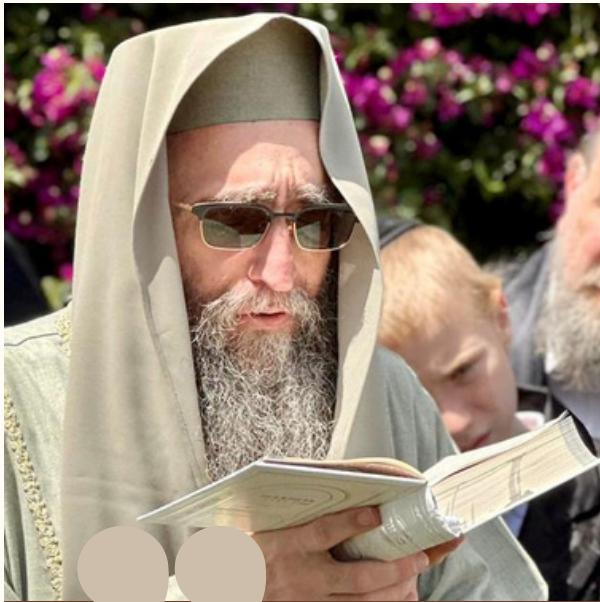


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When G_d promises a reward for a Mitzvah, it will reach the person eventually; one only needs to wait with patience.

Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto Shlita

Third Meal: Patience for the Reward

"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor... jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment..." (Exodus 3:22).

Derasha

Why did G_d command only the women and children to borrow clothes? Didn't the men need clothes as well?

We know from the Sages that the clothes the Israelites wore in the desert grew with them and never wore out for forty years. However, this only applied to the clothes they were actually wearing. Clothes kept in trunks or drawers wore out and decayed.

When Pharaoh chased Israel into the sea, he took all his wealth and the best soldiers. These soldiers wore their finest armor and garments. When the sea spat out the Egyptians, the Israelite men took the garments of the soldiers as booty. G_d wanted the women and children to also have fine clothing, but the Egyptian women did not chase Israel to the sea. Therefore, G_d commanded the women to borrow clothes from their neighbors before leaving.

This shows that everything G_d promises is fulfilled to the last detail. Sometimes a person does a Mitzvah and feels the promised reward hasn't arrived. One must wait. Nothing is hidden from G_d. If He promised "great wealth," He ensures every individual—man, woman, and child—receives it in the most honorable way.

Segulah for Peace in the Home

For those seeking a "Segulah" for Shalom Bayit (Peace in the Home) when there are unexplained arguments:

Read the "Alpha Beta" (Psalm 119) according to the letters of the Hebrew words "Shalom HaBayit" (ש-ל-מ-ב-ה-ב-א). Read the sections corresponding to those letters (Shin, Lamed, Vav, Mem, Heh, Bet, Yud, Tav) for several consecutive days. This is a powerful remedy to remove the "Satan" of groundless conflict from the home.

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**The root of
great power
lies in the first
thing a person
hears.**

**Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef
Pinto Shlita**

Fourth Meal: The Power of Hearing

Derasha

People often underestimate the power of hearing, but it can have an unparalleled impact. A person who knows how to listen and receive what they hear possesses immense strength.

The Mishnah says of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hanania: "Happy is she who bore him." His mother would circulate among the study halls of her city, asking the sages to pray that the child in her womb would be wise. Later, she would bring his cradle into the synagogue so that his ears would absorb the sounds of Torah, even before he could understand them. This shaped his soul from infancy to receive only spiritual matters.

The "Bnei Yissaschar" and his Grandson

It is told that the holy "Bnei Yissaschar" would teach his young grandson Kabbalah (the secrets of the Torah). People were shocked: "The child is so young! He doesn't even know how to read and write the basics yet; why teach him Kabbalah?"

The Rabbi replied with the Mishnah: "He who learns as a child, to what is he compared? To ink written on new paper." He explained that even if the child doesn't understand the concepts now, the holy words are being etched into his soul. Years later, when he studies them properly, they will be easily absorbed because he has "heard" them before.

This is a major principle: G_d gives the blessing and the curse based on "that which you shall hear" (Deuteronomy 11:27). Everything begins with the root, and the greatest power is found in what a person hears first. When a person hears good things, their soul is uplifted; when they hear bad things, it feeds the roots of evil within them.

*May the Merit of the Admor stand for the success
of the entire House of Israel.*

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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THE WISDOM OF THE LEADER

Once when Rabbi Meir of Lublin, zt"l, left the Beit Knesset on Shabbat and set out for home, he noticed that a Jew had left his store open on Shabbat for business.

A student of his, who was accompanying the Rabbi, tried to dissuade his teacher from entering the shop and reproving the owner, because this man was known to be violent and aggressive, and would hurt anyone that intervened with his business.

Nonetheless, the Rabbi of Lublin entered the shop and did not say a word, but simply sat and began to recite the Mishnayot of tractate Shabbat by heart.

It was not long before crowds of people gathered next to the store to witness the unusual sight: The Rabbi of the city found himself a suitable corner to study Mishnayot Shabbat... Naturally, the owner of the store was forced to close his shop on the spot.

Men of Faith

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

At the chanukat habayit of one of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's students living in Ashdod, someone got up and told the following unbelievable story that happened to her mother when she was living in Casablanca: My mother would go out every day to the market to do her shopping. On the way, she would stop at the house of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in order to receive his blessings. Once, the tzaddik asked her, "Where are you going?" "To the market to do my shopping as usual," she answered. "Do not go to the market," the Rav instructed her. "Go back home and stay there. You can do your shopping in the afternoon or even tomorrow." The woman did not ask any questions. If the tzaddik said so, certainly there was a good reason for it. Without a word, she returned to her house. When her husband saw her, he asked why she had returned home before getting her shopping done. "That is what the tzaddik told me to do," she answered. "Didn't the tzaddik tell you why you should go home?" asked the husband. "The tzaddik did not give any reason, and I also did not ask. Since he advised me to go home, I did exactly as he said." A few minutes later, one of the neighbors knocked on the door and told her, "Hurry over to your daughter's house. She asked me to notify you that her husband suffered a stroke, and he is in critical condition." Only then did she understand the reason why Rabbi Chaim had told her to hurry home. It was in order that she should be available for her daughter in time. She rushed to her daughter's house and her daughter informed her weakly, "Mamma! My husband is dying." After a few minutes, her husband returned his soul to his Creator. When Rabbi Chaim came to console them during the shivah, the mother asked him, "Rabbi! Why didn't you tell me that my son-in-law was about to die? Why did you just tell me to go home without giving any reason?" The tzaddik answered, "Did you want me to cause you grief earlier? It is enough to suffer the anguish now!" From this we can perceive the greatness of the tzaddik. Rabbi Chaim knew through Divine inspiration everything that would happen. But, even so, he did not want to cause another Jew any additional pain. He felt their distress. Because of his exceptionally kind heart, he did all he could to reduce their suffering.



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