

# Derech Ha-Rif

Excerpts from the Torah discourse delivered by The great Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto Shlita

For the Torah portion Mishpatim | Volume 62 | 1 adar



## First Shabbat Meal

“These are the laws that you shall place before them (Shemot 21:1).”

Any trouble that befalls a person should be taken with joy as it is a part of the person's Tikkun, rectification of the Soul.

The Zohar on the Parsha commences with a very perplexing interpretation. “And these are the Laws- these are the laws of Gilgulim, reincarnation.” From where did the Zohar come to this interpretation? In truth, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is revealing in the Zohar the deeper meaning behind many happenings, the celestial calculations that are behind incidents that surpass intellectual comprehension.

For example, a person may be condemned for an action he didn't commit, that is entirely removed from his reality. They may ask why such a thing is befalling them and there may be no logical answer. When such things occur, one should know it is a rectification for an action committed in a previous incarnation of one's soul.

The following story provides insight into the workings of Gilgulim and how one should react to incidents which surpass one's comprehension. There was once a horse merchant who had one particular horse that was aged but the hardest working of them all. One day, the merchant decided to organise his office and order all his documents. Among his contracts was one particular contract involving someone who owed him a sum of money, having not yet repaid, but who had unfortunately passed away. Pitying the loanee, he tore up the contract, forgiving the repayment of the loan.

As he was tearing up the contract, he heard a commotion outside, and to his great surprise found his aged horse dead on the ground. The unexpected nature of the situation led him to his Rabbi for an explanation of what had happened. After hearing all that had occurred that morning, he calmly explained to the merchant that because the loanee hadn't repaid his loan, he had been forced to reincarnate as a horse to repay the lender. But when the lender expressed his will to forgive the loan, there was no more need to remain reincarnated and as a result the horse had died at that very moment.

There are two lessons to be learnt from this story. First, one should accept every situation that Hashem brings upon them because it may very well be the rectification for an act in a previous lifetime. Second, one should be very meticulous to tie up all loose ends, be

it monetary in nature or simply an interaction with another person that didn't conclude well. One should conclude all affairs in one's life in a wholesome and positive manner so that the soul attains the completion it calls for.



Scan the Qcode to join the great Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto Shlita's whataapp group



## Soul Of the Rif

Every Jew needs to know that the Jewish people are above the constellations. When a Jew attaches himself or herself to Hashem, there is no fate, feeling or income. The Jewish people are above fate, anyone who is written by Hashem to have income, blessing, salvation or whatever it may be, will receive it, no matter what. Hashem has many ways, and gives a person what they deserve. When a person attaches themselves to fortune, income, and/or a reality of this world, then they will be subject to such a reality, like the nations of the world. There will be good times and less good times, and so too, the way that they are sustained will be like the rest of the world. However, when a person is attached to Hashem, they are above all of the predictions and forecasts, above everything, they will have tremendous Siyata Dishmaya (Heavenly assistance) in all that they do.





## 2nd Shabbat Meal

**"When you acquire a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years, and in the seventh he will go out free (Shemot 21:2)"**

**For a person who is not careful about that which belongs to his fellow and damages it, the Torah will not have mercy on what he himself owns**

The holy Torah tells us in this week's portion, "When you acquire a Hebrew slave, he shall work for six years, and in the seventh he will go out free." If we look deeply at the entire concept of the Eved Ivri (Jewish slave), a wondrous point emerges. In regard to a Jew who stole his fellow's money and does not have the ability to return the stolen item, the Torah says that he should be taken and sold as a slave for six years. In the seventh year, he goes out free without payment of money. The owner takes this person as a slave and marries him to a Canaanite maidservant if he wishes. If children are born from this union, they belong to the master, and they do not go out to freedom after six years, rather, they continue to remain Canaanite slaves forever.

The holy Torah is a Torah of kindness and Hashem is the Master of Mercy, so the question must be asked: This person stole money and became greatly diminished as a slave for six years. During this time, he is further lowered by marrying a gentile maidservant, children are born but they remain detached from him forever, he goes out after six years and is able to become a rich man, but at the same time, his children remain with his former master forever. Since the Torah is one of kindness and mercy, where is the mercy on the Eved Ivri in this setup?

There is a key concept here, a person who stole from his friend and did not have mercy on him, and took something which was not his, shows that he has no mercy for the other person in his heart. As it were, the Torah also loses its mercy for him, in order for him to learn that something which is his, such as his son, who originates from him, will be lost from him and remain a slave forever.

A person needs to know the value of something which belongs to his fellow. If he does not value this, the Torah will not value that which belongs to the person himself. If a person takes without considering the toil his fellow invested to attain the item, then Hashem takes their child as a slave forever.

A person must be very careful about interpersonal matters, as these are things which are very sensitive. In the course of life, a person may lose sensitivity for things which belong to another. If a person damages the property of his fellow, the Torah does not have mercy on him, but rather deals with him in the manner that he dealt with others. The way a person is dealt with matches their own behaviour, if a person acts in a disgraceful manner, the Torah repays a person with such conduct.

**"And if a person strikes the eye of his slave (Shemot 21:26):"**

**The two ways a person can subjugate the Evil Inclination and become free from him.**

The holy Torah tells us in this week's portion: "And if a person strikes the eye of his slave or the eye of his female slave and destroys it, he shall send him free in place of his eye. And if he makes the tooth of his male slave or his female slave fall out, he shall send him free in place of his tooth." These two verses of the Torah inform us that if a person strikes the eye of his slave, he must release him to be free, likewise the same applies if he strikes his tooth.

Based on this, it is possible to derive that there are two ways for one to subjugate their inclinations and overpower them and become free of the Yetzer Hara (Evil Inclination) and climb to the highest level. Either one breaks the desire of the eye (the lust of seeing), or of the tooth (the lust of eating).

When a person dominates over the lust of seeing and is careful about what they see, they ensure that they only look at holy things and that they don't ruin their eyes by seeing impure things, G-d forbid. So too, in regard to eating, when a person is careful only to eat that which the Torah permits, and to eat their food in a manner which the Torah permits, one subjugates the desire to eat, and comes out free, thereby subjugating the Yetzer Hara. Such a person dominates over their inclinations and their inclinations do not rule over them.

This is the highest level - a person who dominates over the lust of the eye and the lust of eating. The covenant of blindness and the covenant of the tongue are one. When a person guards over these two covenants which are in fact one, he goes free and merits to ascend to the highest and most elevated levels.

## Q & A with the Rif



### Question:

Dear Rabbi,

I wanted to ask the following question. I am undergoing a divorce, and my relatives are constantly asking about my wellbeing, as well as questioning me along the lines of why etc. I want to be careful about Lashon Hara (the prohibition of gossip) in general, and in particular at this point in time, how can I answer them honestly without hurting others?

### Answer:

Tell them not to involve themselves in your affairs, and they will stop entering things which are your business. However when you instruct them, you must do so with wisdom and understanding.

In regard to matters which contain concerns of Lashon Hara, a person needs to act with wisdom. One needs to tread carefully, and avoid topics which entail Lashon Hara, and one must avoid entering into arguments.







## 3rd Shabbat meal

**“And Moshe took half of the blood and placed it in basins, and he sprinkled half of the blood on the altar (Shemot 24:6).”  
A person must sanctify and connect to his spiritual half in Heaven.**

At the end of this week's portion, we find a tremendous wonder. Moshe stands and seals a covenant between Hashem and the Jewish people. The holy Torah tells us, “And Moshe took half of the blood and placed it in basins, and he sprinkled half of the blood on the altar. And he took the Book of the Covenant and he read it in the ears of the people and they said, “All that Hashem has said we will do and we will hear. And Moshe took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and he said, “Behold the blood of the covenant which Hashem has sealed with you on these things.”

Rashi comments there on the verse, “And Moshe took half of the blood” that it was an angel that came and divided the blood. This comment requires understanding. The Torah tells us that Moshe split the blood and Rashi says that an angel came and did it. Half of this blood was sprinkled on Bnei Yisrael and half of it was sprinkled on the altar. It is necessary to understand why it was needed for half of the blood to be sprinkled on the altar and half on the nation? According to Rashi, why was it necessary for an angel to come and split the blood? Furthermore, the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 6:5) states that the angel was similar to Moshe, and some say that it was the angel Matat who came and divided the blood. Why did things take place in this manner? A further question can be asked as follows. Our holy Rabbis comment on the verse, “And Chanoch walked with Hashem and was no more,” that Chanoch was the Saro shel Olam - the official of the world. The commentators ask how could this be? Surely the Saro shel Olam was present at the creation of the world, yet Chanoch was only born six hundred and twenty-two years after the world was created? Therefore, how could Chanoch be the Saro shel Olam?

The commentaries teach that the following verse “I was young and now I have aged (Tehillim 37:25)” is stated about Chanoch. When he was in this world, he was young, “but I have grown old” refers to his time in heaven. Within every person, there are two forms of strength, the soul is split into two parts, half is found in heaven and half is on the earth. Half of Chanoch which was in heaven is the angel Matat, and his second half was on earth in the form of Chanoch. When he ascended heavenwards, he became a full part of the angel Matat.

The same concept can be used to explain the nature of Moshe, our teacher, about whom the Torah says that he was a man of Hashem, i.e., an angel, and half of him was flesh and blood. The Talmud (Sotah 13b) tells of how the evil kingdom went out to inspect Moshe's grave, despite the Torah warning, “and no man knows his grave [i.e., its location] until today (Devarim 34:6).” They went to the top of the mountain and saw it below, they went to the bottom of the mountain and saw it above them. They tried having people stand in both places, yet they still found that it was both above and below them at the same time.

The explanation is that Moshe was both a man of G-d and an ordinary person, he was evenly split between the two personas. The greatness of Moshe our teacher is that he was like an angel of Hashem like Matat.

Based on this, it is possible to explain how Rashi can say that an angel split the blood when the Torah says that it was Moshe who split the blood. Moshe was like the angel Matat, he split the blood, and, as the Midrash brings, the angel looked like Moshe, i.e., Moshe who was a man of Hashem was half like an angel, while in this state, he split the blood.

This is the greatness of a human being, a person who knows how to connect to their upper half, to be a man of Hashem and a holy person, can ascend and reach the highest level. A person can never stop, they must always aspire, and say, “When will my deeds reach the levels of the deeds of my fathers?”, reaching the highest levels. When a person attaches themselves to Torah and holiness, they reach great heights and attain incredible achievements. “For every item of liability ... about which he says, “This is it” the court shall come to both of their claims. Whoever the court finds guilty shall return double to his fellow (Shemot 22:8).”

When a person goes to a Din Torah (Halachic court case), even if they are wrongly found liable, Hashem will return them their dues

This week's portion states: “For every item of liability, whether an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or a garment, regarding any lost item about which he says, “This is it” the court shall come to both of their claims. Whoever the court finds guilty shall return double to his fellow.” The verse in Tehillim (99:4) states “There is judgement in charity in Yaakov.” On the basis of this line, our holy Rabbis teach that this refers to when a person goes to a Din Torah. If the judge makes an error and has a person pay when they are not liable and the person knows that they are not liable, what should they do?

A person needs to be aware of a key and important concept, namely, that Hashem is liable to return what a person has lost due to the judge's mistaken ruling. The verse means to teach that there is judgement if they judged a person correctly, and if not, there is charity, as Hashem returns a person that which they should have as a form of charity. Since the judge has caused a person financial loss, Hashem must return to a person that which was taken from them. However, it is entirely different, if a person does not go to a Din Torah, and they were found liable, even if incorrectly. In such a situation, Hashem does not need to return to a person that which was taken from them.

Therefore, if a person has a problem, they should run to a Din Torah, for even if there will be a mistake there, such as a person being made to pay a debt which they do not really owe, Hashem Himself will return to you that which was taken from you.

## ספר דברים בשבת ישועה שפוגעת בול!



**לקבלת הספר: 03-792-2548**  
**חפשו: ספר הישועות - ספר דברים**

## Treasure charms from the Rif



The Sefer 'Yalkut Me'Am Lo'ez' on Tehillim relates the following in the name of Rabbi Chaim Vital. He said that it is propitious to read the entire Sefer Tehillim on Rosh Chodesh Adar.

Anyone who seeks to take upon himself to complete the entire Sefer Tehillim on Rosh Chodesh Adar will be worthy of great merits. May they seek to have us and the entire Yeshiva in mind when praying. May they pray for the Gates of Heaven to open and shower us with Heavenly blessings. Let these people be blessed.





The Sefer 'Darkei Moshe' records a wondrous story illustrating the power answering of 'Amen'. The story involves the 'Ba'al Ha'Levushim,' Rav Mordechai Yoffe, who was one of the leading Rabbis in Europe in the sixteenth century. He wrote ten books, which he called 'the Levush.'

Rav Mordechai was initially the Av Beit Din of a small community. One day he was approached by the lay leaders of a far larger community to become the Av Beit Din of their community. Rav Mordechai agreed to their request but with one caveat. He explained that although he was a Torah scholar, he had not yet mastered the Halachot (laws) pertaining to the fixing of the Jewish calendar, such as how to determine the length of the months and years. He explained that their community did not have experts in this area for him to learn from, and he would therefore need to find someone to learn them from before beginning his appointment. Therefore, prior to starting his position, he would like to travel to Venice to learn from the Sefardi Chachamim who were renowned for their expertise in this area of Halacha.

The lay leaders were delighted that he had accepted their offer and gracefully agreed to his request. Rav Mordechai travelled to Venice and found his way to the great Chacham Abuhav and asked to be taught the relevant Halachot. Rabbi Abuhav readily agreed, and Rav Mordechai spent the next couple of months under his tutelage. Shortly before he returned to serve as the Av Beit Din of the large community, he was having a meal in the home of Chacham Abuhav. At some point, the Chacham's young son recited a Bracha, and Rav Mordechai, who was engaged in another matter, failed to answer 'Amen.' Chacham Abuhav was disturbed by Rav Mordechai's disregard for the importance of answering 'Amen' and therefore decided to excommunicate him. Rav Mordechai was understandably distraught but accepted the ruling of his teacher. In line with the laws of excommunication, he withdrew to the outskirts of town for thirty days and conducted himself in line with Halachot of one in excommunication.

After thirty days, Rav Mordechai approached Chacham Abuhav and asked to be forgiven. He explained that he had not intentionally disregarded the importance of answering 'Amen,' but had simply been distracted by other matters. He continued, that all the while that the Chacham refused to forgive him, he felt that his prayers would be more distant from Hashem, for when one's teacher bears negativity towards them, Hashem does not receive that person's prayers. Chacham Abuhav lovingly turned to his student and said that he had not simply been angry at Rav Mordechai for not answering 'Amen,' rather there had been more depth to his actions. He explained that he loved Rav Mordechai as a son, and it was that very love which had driven him to ostracise him. "You see," exclaimed Chacham Abuhav, "when you didn't answer 'Amen,' Heaven decreed the death penalty against you. I therefore resolved to excommunicate you, for that to serve as an atonement to remove the death penalty from upon you." The Chacham continued saying: "In order to be fully absolved of the death penalty, it is imperative that you accept yourself to repeat the story which I am about to tell you anywhere where you travel. The retelling of this story will serve as the completion of your atonement throughout your life." Rav Mordechai readily accepted to do so and with that Chacham Abuhav related the following story:

Prior to the decree to expel the Jews from Spain, the Spanish Jewish community was incredible. The communities were of astounding prestige to a degree that had not been experienced in other communities of the past. The communities were wealthy in both physical terms and spiritual terms, rich in money and in Torah. However, all this came to a sharp end upon the evil expulsion decree.

One of these communities was home to an exceptional Rabbi. The Rav was wise, pious, and extraordinarily wealthy; he was regarded in the highest esteem by Jews and gentiles alike. The Rav's reputation had spread to the king, and the king of Spain considered him to be a cherished friend. In fact, in the past, the king had decreed that the Jews were to be expelled, only to repeal it on the encouragement of this saintly Rabbi. One day, while the Rabbi was sitting and readying himself to pray Mincha, he was accosted by the community's lay leaders. They informed him that the king had yet again decreed their expulsion and they were in terrible angst as to their future in Spain. They beseeched the Rabbi to approach the king, as he had done in the past, to persuade him to repeal the terrible decree. The Rabbi listened patiently and agreed to do so, but on the proviso that he first pray Mincha. The lay leaders listened but persisted and explained that this task was for the sake of the entire community and should therefore be performed prior to him praying Mincha. They insisted that he first approach the king to annul the decree and only afterwards pray Mincha. The Rabbi agreed and proceeded to make his way to the king's palace. He arrived at the palace and the king saw him from a distance. The king was

overjoyed to see his friend and immediately rushed to greet the Rabbi with warmth and love. The Rabbi sensed the king's joy and rationalised to himself that he would surely be able to talk the king out of the decree as he had done in the past. The king and the Rabbi sat down as old friends and spoke warmly to one another. Suddenly, a prominent priest who served in a distant land, which was under the king's dominion, arrived at the palace, accompanied by a prestigious entourage. The king warmly received the priest, and the priest began to bestow blessing after blessing upon the king. The blessings continued, and the Rav noticed that it was almost Shkiah (sunset) the final time to pray Mincha. The Rav therefore discreetly withdrew to the side of the room and proceeded to pray Mincha.

The priest noticed the Rav praying at the side and poignantly halted his flurry of blessings on the king. He instructed all present to respond 'Amen' to ensure that the blessings be answered, and only then continued with his blessings. Once the Rav had finished Mincha, the priest announced that it was imperative for them to ensure that all those present had responded 'Amen' to his blessings. He continued saying that if all those present had responded 'Amen' then the blessings would most certainly stimulate bountiful blessing upon the king, however if anyone present had not responded 'Amen,' then awful tragedies would strike the king. The priest began rallying around the room checking that everyone had answered 'Amen.' All his entourage responded in the affirmative, as did all the king's workers. The priest then turned to the Rav and asked whether he had answered 'Amen.' The Rav was flustered and explained that he had not. He had been in the middle of prayer and been too immersed to notice what had been occurring around him.

Upon hearing this, the priest began to tear his clothes, tug on his hair and weep dramatically. During the weeping, he murmured through muffled tears that the Rav's failure to respond 'Amen' had caused terrible decrees to be imposed against the king. The king was distraught and became infuriated with the Rav, attributing all the terrible decrees to his failure to answer 'Amen.' The king promptly instructed his servants to take the Rav and kill him mercilessly. He instructed them to cut the Rav into many pieces and send the pieces to the Rav's family in a sack. The king's servants acceded and executed the king's instructions; they killed the holy Rabbi. The entire Jewish community were devastated by the brutal murder of their Rabbi, and upon losing his support, they were expelled from Spain. This entire episode marked one of the darkest periods in our history. Some time passed, and a close friend of the Rav, who was himself a great Chassid (pious person), remained troubled by the brutal events which had befallen his holy friend. How could it be that such a holy person had been ridiculed in such a dastardly manner? The Chassid turned to the Almighty and questioned how such a thing could have happened? Years passed, and the Chassid found no solace, his entire life was gripped by pain, unable to surmount the memories of his holy friend's torturous end.

One day, the Chassid was sitting in his room learning Torah, and his friend, who had been killed, suddenly appeared to him. His friend was in full form and explained that he had come down from Heaven to put his friend at ease and explain why he had been killed in such a gruesome manner. He said that indeed he had been a tremendous Tzaddik and had observed all the Mitzvot, bar one. He said that on one occasion when his young son had made a Bracha, he had failed to answer 'Amen.' This failure to answer 'Amen' had warranted him the death penalty. However, Hashem in His mercy had pushed off the decree and gifted him the opportunity to atone for his sin. This had culminated in him being in the king's palace and failing to answer 'Amen.' This was Hashem's way of clearly demonstrating that he was to be killed for not having answered 'Amen' all those years prior. The Chassid then turned to his friend and comforted him, explaining that he had in fact been deserving of such a death and had not suffered more than he ought to.

This was the story which Chacham Abuhav, the Sefardi, related to Rav Mordechai, the Ba'al Ha'Levushim. Chacham Abuhav implored Rav Mordechai to retell this story wherever he went, and to have his children do the same; this he explained, would bolster people's appreciation of answering 'Amen.'

The power of 'Amen' is breath-taking. Indeed, anyone who answers 'Amen' will be forgiven for his sins and merit greatness. As for us, the holy congregation of 'Shuva Yisrael,' we strive to retell this holy story every Rosh Chodesh in the manner fashioned by Chacham Abuhav and the Ba'al Ha'Levushim. Please G-d we will merit joy, salvation, and bountiful Divine assistance.

To receive the above and to join the great Rabbi's holy WhatsApp groups send a message to 052-5106510