

# Pachad David

Published by **Mosdot Orot Chaim U'Moshe** in Israel

Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita**  
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*Maskil L'David*

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita**

### The Choice Is Yours

*"I call heaven and earth today to bear witness against you: I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse; and you shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your offspring"*

(Devarim 30:19)

Hashem created this world with two realities: the reality of life and the reality of death. Since He wants His children to live both in this world and the Next, He exhorts us to choose life. The concept of choice is a deep one, seemingly self-contradictory. On the one hand, Hashem gives His children the option to choose between life and death, blessing and curse. On the other hand, all the many mitzvot in the Torah seem to deprive man of the power of free choice, dictating the way he should behave.

Before delving into this matter, let us make it clear that man has the power of free choice, even if it looks otherwise. This is attested to in the words (Tehillim 135:4), "For G-d selected Jacob for his own, Israel as His treasure." The words **בחר י-ה** (G-d selected) contain the same letters as the word **בחירה** (choice). The sons of Jacob, Bnei Yisrael, always have the power of free choice.

The Torah's injunction to "choose life" means that man should "choose actions which will result in life." Hashem therefore recommends that His sons go on the right path, so that they merit life in this world as well as the Next. Does this inhibit man's free will? Not at all. For example, the Torah says

one must observe Shabbat. Each and every person has the option of deciding whether or not he will do so. One choice will bring him to a good place. The other will not.

A man is walking through the forest. He sees a fork in the road. Both paths will lead him to the king's palace. One road, paved and smooth, brings him past a jungle of bears, which then leads to the palace. The second road is strewn with pebbles and ditches and then leads to the palace. Does the man have free choice as to which road to take? Of course; but he will most likely not take the road past the bears, for it will bring him to an early death.

The Torah contains positive and negative commandments. One who is meticulous in all mitzvot will merit eternal life and blessing. Nevertheless, the choice is his. Will he perform mitzvot or not? Although the option is his, the price of a bad choice is steep. Out of His extreme love for us, Hashem wishes to confer His good upon us, and therefore commands us to "choose life." This will boomerang back to us, bringing us goodness.

Man is a creature of free choice. Nevertheless, this choice is limited, for he knows the outcome of each decision. The Torah's injunction to choose life further limits his choices. Free choice in this world is limited, for man knows the outcome of his decisions. If he chooses wrong, he will pay the price. This knowledge should influence a person to choose the path of goodness.

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### Hillulah of Tzaddikim

28 - Rabbi Yitzchak Ackrish

29 - Rabbi Shlomo Amarleo

1 - Rabbi Yehudah A'yish

2 - Rabbi David Rappaport

3 - Rabbi Yosef Vital

4 - Rabbi Avraham ben Yechiel

5 - Rabbi Baruch Shalom Halevi  
Ashlag



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Torah Supports Its Adherents

I was once asked to admit two additional avreichim to a kollel under my auspices. This would demand providing their monthly stipends, as well. After agreeing, I suddenly remembered that I had pledged a considerably large donation to a kollel in Netanya.

I found myself in a predicament. How could I contribute to the kollel while supporting two new members of my kollel? I thought that maybe it would be sensible to cancel my agreement with these new avreichim.

I cleared a window of time from my obligations and sat down with my thoughts. I finally came to the

conclusion that the one who was trying to get me to reject the new kollel members was none other than the Yetzer Hara. In order to ward off his wily words, I kept repeating to myself the following mantra: These avreichim are not coming to learn here for my personal honor, but for the sake of Heaven. Certainly, Hashem will take care of their monthly stipends. For good measure, I lifted my eyes heavenward, and asked for siyata di'Shemaya to help me support the Torah study of these avreichim.

Later in the day, I received a call from a Jew in Marseille, who had a certain problem. After I offered my advice, I added that he should consider how much he would like to pay Hashem as

a token of his thanks when the matter was resolved, with His help. The man heard me out, but did not reply.

After some time, he called me again. He informed me that, Baruch Hashem, his problem had been settled in the best possible manner. I reminded him of his pledge to Heaven. He said that he intended to honor it to the last penny. When I inquired how, he answered that he wished to support two new avreichim in my kollel for an entire year.

How great is the power of Torah! The merit of the Torah study of these fine young men stood by them, and Hashem provided for them honorably.

### The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

*"I will rejoice intensely with Hashem"*

(Yeshayau 61)

The connection to this Shabbat: This haftarah is part of the seven consecutive haftarot of comfort read on the seven Shabbatot following Tishah B'Av.



### Guard Your Tongue

#### The Power of Speech

A person should consider and realize that when he speaks lashon hara about his fellow, also in Heaven the angels mention his sins, as the Rokeach writes in his sefer.

Chazal say (Shabbat 149b) that even when the nevi'im and chassidim beg mercy on Yisrael to benefit them, they do not want to include the evil people at all. In fact they allude to this (that they are excluding them altogether from their prayers) in their prayers, as it says (Tehillim 125:4), "Do good, Hashem, to good people, and to the upright in their hearts."

### Reasons for Jewish Customs



What is the reason that it was decided to judge the world in the month of Tishrei?

This is because the conduct of Hashem is not like the conduct of people; It is the trait of people to judge their friends when they are in a favorable mood, and their enemies when they are annoyed. However, Hashem judges the entire world in a favorable time, in the month of Tishrei, which has many holidays and mitzvot.





## Words of Wisdom

### Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

#### *Equality and Mutual Responsibility*

*“The heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers – all the men of Israel” (Devarim 29:9)*

Even though I first mentioned your leaders, your elders, and your officers, all of you are equal before me as it says, “all the men of Israel.”

Another explanation is: All of you are responsible for each other. Even if there is only one tzaddik amongst you, the entire world is found innocent, as it says (Mishlei 10:25) “But a righteous one is the foundation of the world.” When one of you sin – the entire generation is struck, as we find in reference to Achan (Yehoshua 22) “Did not Achan, son of Zerah commit treachery regarding the consecrated property,” etc. The attribute of punishment is weaker, yet the entire nation was held accountable. The attribute of goodness is greater, then how much more so [will the good deeds of one righteous person shower goodness upon the entire nation]. Thus it says “all the men of Israel.”

Not only the prominent people among you, but even “your small children, your women, and your geirim (proselytes), and thus it is stated “all the men of Israel.” Usually a man shows preference for males than for the females, but Hashem is not so, because He shows mercy for all his creations, for the males and the females and the tzaddikim as well as the wicked, as it says, “from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water.”

(Midrash Tanchuma)

#### *The Reward is Dependent upon the Effort*

*“All the men of Israel” (Devarim 29:9)*

From this our Sages learn: Every single person is obligated to declare that for me the world was created.

“Your small children and your women;” do your children understand anything? What is this coming to teach us? Reward is given to boors who do not understand anything.

Why do the boors get rewarded?

Hashem gives the boors greater reward than the other listeners, because the other listeners enjoy what they hear, but the boors do not understand anything and they cannot enjoy [the lecture]. Therefore, Hashem gives the boors a greater reward than the other listeners.

(Pitron Torah)

#### *It Is Up to You*

*“For this commandment that I command you today – it is not hidden from you and it is not distant” (Devarim 30:11)*

Rabbi Yanai says: “What does this resemble?”

It resembles a loaf of bread that was hung in the air. A foolish man says: who is capable of getting it? A wise man says: Did not someone hang it up? He fetches a ladder or a stick and takes it down.

So too, one who is foolish says: How can I learn the whole Torah? But one who is wise, what does he do? He learns one chapter every single day until he finishes to study the entire Torah.

Hashem says, “It is not hidden.” And if it seems hidden [impossible to accomplish], then it is “from you [your fault],” because you do not engage in it.

(Devarim Rabbah)

## Treasures

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



#### *Mirror Image*

“You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem, your G-d: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers – all the men of Israel” (Devarim 29:9)

The Zohar associates this pasuk “You are standing today” with Rosh Hashanah, when we recite, “Today is the beginning of Creation, today He

will stand all creatures in judgment” (Musaf, Rosh Hashanah). Just as all Klal Yisrael, from the most prominent to the simplest, stood before Moshe as he said these words, so too, do all people stand before Hashem on the Day of Judgment, elders and youngsters, important and humble alike. Although we all stand before Hashem, not everyone merits standing in His proximity.

Hashem, Who is King of all kings, judges all who appear before Him on Rosh Hashanah. Whether or not one will stand within His vicinity depends solely upon his preparation prior to this meeting. The days of mercy and forgiveness, beginning Rosh Chodesh Elul, serve this purpose. These are the days when Hashem, so to speak, steps out of His royal palace and comes into the field, mingling with His children. The Navi, Yeshayahu, exhorts us (55:6), “Seek Hashem when He can be found, call upon Him when He is near.” One who has the wisdom of foresight will utilize these days maximally, returning to Him in complete repentance.

The Midrash states (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 6:3), “I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine.” If one fulfills his obligation as Hashem’s beloved, coming close to Him, then he will merit Hashem being his. Hashem will reflect His love and empower him with the ability to come back to Him completely.

The remedy for this is to constantly bear in mind the pasuk in Tehillim (16:8), “I have set Hashem before me always.” A person is enjoined to feel Hashem’s Presence at every stage of life and in everything he does, not just at the approach of the Days of Judgment. When one accustoms himself to living with the realization that there is “a seeing eye, a listening ear, and all of your deeds are recorded in a book” (Avot 2:1), it makes no difference what the season is. Even during the so-called down-times, one continues in his loyalty to Hashem and His mitzvot. Doesn’t a king feel impelled to act regally even in his innermost chambers? His status obligates refined behavior wherever he is. So too, must we, the sons of kings, conduct ourselves with perfection in our homes and outside, in the days of routine and in the days of vacation. When one lives by this credo, then, when the Days of Judgment draw near, he is capable of entering the proper mindset without finding the change drastic.



Without prior preparation, all the efforts invested in prayer and Selichot in the month of Elul can go down the drain. Sometimes precisely as a result of our preparations of the simanim; when we are busily engaged in activities related to Rosh Hashanah, just then the Yetzer Hara causes us to stumble with petty issues and become irrationally hung up on trivial matters.

In all issues concerning one's fellow man, we have to be all the more careful. The key to understanding the matter is clarified by an article of the Rosh Yeshivah of Ponovezh, the gaon Rabbi David Povarsky, zt"l: "And everyone's signature is in it," because a person should know that he himself is the one who authors the Books of Life and the Books of Dead which are opened on Rosh Hashanah. Therefore, when preparing ourselves for the Day of Judgment, we must attempt to place ourselves in the Book of Life.

Rabbi David continues and explains:

"I remember years ago, when the Beit Midrash was crowded on Rosh Hashanah, and when one person sat down, the next person had to stand up because there was no place for two people to sit together. The one who stood the whole time so that his fellow could continue sitting, he signed himself in to his own Book of Life on Rosh Hashanah. However, the other fellow continued sitting without noticing anything..."

And what happened afterwards? The gaon Rabbi David stated his view:

Afterwards I followed-up after the one who had stood the whole time over the course of the following year to see what his conduct was like, and I noticed that everywhere he turned, he tried to perform such acts of kindness. He truly signed himself into the Book of Life for always."

### *No Mercy*

The mashgiach Rabbi Shlomoh Wolbe, zt"l expanded in his talks during these days on the words of the gemara: "Man is judged only according to his actions up to the time of judgment."

His future behavior is not taken into consideration. If at the time of judgment he is a righteous person then he is judged as a tzaddik. Therefore, it is important to work on character improvement, not to get angry and not to hold grudges, to keep away from hatred and jealousy. One must prepare himself, but without tension and edginess! Since we state in our prayers "For You are the One who forgives Israel and pardons the tribes of Yeshurun," then likewise, we should forgive and pardon.

In addition, the mashgiach would exhort – there is another deeper issue alluded to here:

"One who does not display mercy on his fellow, mercy is not displayed to him from Heaven."

Why? What is the reason for this?

One who does not display mercy on his fellow, even if he has thousands of merits and other good deeds to his credit, it is not possible that mercy will be displayed toward him from Heaven! How terribly frightening! How can a hot-tempered, exacting, and stingy person stand in judgment, since he is treated in the same way that he treats others? On the other hand, when one displays favorable behavior towards his fellow, acting with concession and mercy, he can get rid of heaps of sins...

His disciple the gaon Rabbi Y. M. Hamnick, shlit"a, related that the mashgiach once warned that it is most important in these days to take caution that, owing to all the tension, one should not get angry. Sometimes precisely in these days, interpersonal relationships become worse.

For example: A Jew stands during the Amidah and is disturbed that his fellow standing next to him is praying in a bit of a loud voice. During the entire prayer he is outraged why his fellow is disturbing him and waits impatiently to finish with "He Who makes peace," so that he could scold him. For a this outburst resulting from high stress, one can lose the merits of his prayers. We must be easygoing and not let hard feeling overcome us.

### *"Your Footsteps Were so Lovely"*

The gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Nathan Wachtfogel, zt"l, related that one night during the month of Elul, Maran the Saba of Kelm, zt"l, dreamt that Rabbeinu Yonah was coming to Kelm, and at the appointed time, he would deliver a lecture in the Beit Haknesset. At the appointed time, all the Jews of the village went to the Beit Haknesset to hear the lecture of Rabbeinu Yonah, who had come in person, precisely during the month of Elul.

When Rabbi Simchah Zissel arrived, the doorman stopped him and asked him his name. The doorman refused to let him in. The Saba begged him and mentioned the memorable names of his ancestors, and his merits in spreading Torah, but the doorman refused to let him in. Then, the Saba told him: Do you know that Rabbi Nachum Velvel is my son? Then the doorman let him in. Right after, Rabbi Simchah Zissel woke up.

Of course, the Saba called his son immediately after the Shacharit services and told him of his vivid dream. In response, Rabbi Nachum Velvel revealed that for a long time he had wore torn, old shoes. Once he happened to be by a shoe-maker and he saw a pair of good strong shoes there. He began to save penny by penny until he obtained the required sum and bought the shoes.

One cold wintry night, he heard someone knocking on his door. It was a poor man begging for charity. When he got up to leave, Rabbi Nachum Velvel noticed that the poor man was walking out in the snow barefoot. He immediately took off his new shoes and handed them to the poor man as a gift. It seems that this deed is what granted his father the merit to enter the Beit Knesset to hear the lecture of Rabbeinu Yonah.

A kindness which is performed with pure intentions and for no personal gain is considered a chessed for the sake of chessed. This is true kindness that in its merit one is granted "good life."