



Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Prineï David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashdod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • Fax: +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



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Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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 LEDAVID

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

From the Heights to the Depths

"Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem, everyone whose heart motivates him shall bring it, as the gift for Hashem" (Shemot 35:5)

I always wondered why it says 'take' and not 'give'; were the Bnei Yisrael not being asked to donate towards the Mishkan? If so, it seems more appropriate for the people to be told 'give'?

We know that the Mishkan served as an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. This sin was a terrible transgression; from that point right until today there is no punishment that befalls the Bnei Yisrael that doesn't contain a small measure of atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. We are still suffering from it today. Why is this? Because until today we cannot grasp how they came to commit this sin.

It is indeed surprising how the Bnei Yisrael, the 'Dor De'ah', who experienced all the miracles in Mitzrayim and at the Yam Suf, could reach a stage of making the Egel. They witnessed Hashem appearing to them on Har Sinai and heard directly from the Almighty, "I am Hashem your G-d". These were the people who "exchanged their Glory for the likeness of a grass-eating ox" (Tehillim 106:20)? They were the generation who ate the manna - spiritual food; every morning they collected the manna that fell directly from heaven. These were the people who stumbled and made an Egel?

Indeed, the wrath that this aroused in Hashem, for which He wished to destroy the Bnei Yisrael, was because of this extreme transformation - "They have strayed quickly from the way" (Shemot 32:8). Particularly because they had shown utter devotion and faithfulness to Hashem by saying, "We will do and we will listen", and now they were disappointing Hashem to this extent; they were renouncing everything with a sin that, chas v'shalom, could only be corrected through extermination.

In order to understand this, we will quote the following Gemara (Shabbat 88a): Rabbi Eliezer said, at the time when Bnei Yisrael preceded "we will listen" with "we will do", a heavenly voice proclaimed, "Who revealed this secret to My children, that the angels use?" This attribute of "na'aseh v'nishma" is appropriate for angels who don't possess a yetzer hara and therefore they can accept to do something before knowing what it is. But man, as long as he is alive, has an evil inclination who limits him and he cannot agree to do something before hearing what it is that is requested from him. Think for a minute - if a tzaddik would ask you, "Would you like to perform a mitzva?" Your automatic answer will be, "Yes my master, which mitzva would you like me to perform?" Is there a flaw in wanting to know what he is referring to? Of course not - for this is the correct order; first to hear and then afterwards to fulfill.

If so, when Am Yisrael said "we will do" before "we will listen", they climbed up to an above-human level, a level that is above nature, and when they sinned with the Egel they fell from that level with dizzying speed; the fall was terrible and aroused terrible anger. Had their ascent

occurred in stages, step after step, it would have offered them more protection. It is well-known that at the time of Matan Torah the Bnei Yisrael reached the highest level, they achieved perfection of creation and were considered like Adam HaRishon before he sinned. This is how Hashem created man: "So Hashem created Man in His image, in the image of Hashem He created him" (Bereishit 1:27), and later on we are told, "and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life", (ibid 2:7). Our chachamim explain, "The One who blew, blew from His own", meaning that Hashem breathed His holy Names into man.

When a person considers the words of the 'Chessed L'Avrohom', written by the Mekubal, Rabbi Avraham Azou-lai zya"ta, he will be astounded to reveal the greatness of man. He explains that all of the four celestial worlds- atzilut, bri'ah, yetzira and assi'ah; are an intrinsic part of man and he contains the pipes of all abundance. The moment a person sins, it is impossible to describe the degree of ruin and destruction that he causes in the world.

When the Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf they lost the gift that they received from the angels - the two crowns with which each one was bestowed, and they also forfeited the experience they merited at Har Sinai of 'seeing' sound, as it says (Shemot 20:15), "The entire people saw the thunder". In addition, all the names of Hashem flew out of them and they were left empty. In order to correct this sin, Hashem said to them, "Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem...gold, silver, copper...Every wise-hearted person among you shall come and make everything that Hashem has commanded. The Tabernacle, its Tent, and its Cover...the purple and scarlet wool". The entire assortment of materials that were needed for constructing the Mishkan, the vessels and the garments, they were told to bring to Betzalel.

The Gemara tells us (Berachot 54a) that Betzalel knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created. He knew how to direct and inject the names of Hashem, as if, into all the materials which were used for making the Mishkan, its vessels and the holy garments. Upon the completion of the Mishkan, Hashem would rest His shechina inside it and this is how the Bnei Yisrael would receive Divine influence - through the Mishkan, its vessels and the garments of the Kohen Gadol. And this is how the holy Names, that departed when they made the Egel, would once again become part of them.

One can say that by using the words "Take from yourselves", Hashem was implying: take from your very selves. What does this refer to? To a person's money. For in man's eyes money is as important to him as his body, and since this is so, when he gives a donation to Hashem, it is as if he has offered his very self to Hashem.

May it be His will that all of us be aroused to serve Hashem with alacrity and enthusiasm for all things holy. Amen.



Walking in their Ways

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

Shabbat - The Source of Blessings for the Entire Week

“On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you” (Shemot 35:2)

I was once in Europe for a time and I participated in many rallies which were held for the sake of bolstering and establishing Torah institutions. These were not institutions with which we are affiliated and I did this without any personal gain, for that is what is expected of us. One must also show concern and take an interest in other people’s affairs. If donating from one’s time for others is important, all the more so one who contributes from his time to Hashem, and dedicates his entire Shabbat for tefillah and Torah. By doing so, all his six days of work are blessed, for Shabbat is the source of blessing; the work of the six days is then done by itself.

I became acquainted with someone from abroad whose business was flourishing, and he used to approach me from time to time, for a blessing to be successful in his dealings. I noticed that he was never concerned about spiritual matters and never asked for a blessing in this regard.

When he approached me last, I said to him – you should know that any success that you enjoy has nothing to do with the merit of Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto zya”a, in whose merit I bless people. All

your success originates from the satan, and it is that alone which is causing your business to thrive. You should know that after one hundred and twenty years, the satan and his entourage will be the ones to greet you...

My words took him by surprise and he was overcome with great fear.

I didn’t let up and rebuked him further: Do you think that one who violates Shabbat and keeps his stores open on Shabbat, will be protected by the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto? Do you think that Rabbi Chaim will bless him? If you are successful in any way, it is singularly due to the power of the satan. Accept upon yourself to observe Shabbat, and then you will be blessed from the source of blessings; this is a blessing from a pure source. If you donate your time to the Creator of the World, He will also contribute and assist you in your endeavors.

I remember that my father and mentor, Rabbeinu Moshe Ahron Pinto zya”a, used to say, “One who wishes to strengthen himself in avodat Hashem, should strengthen himself in observing Shabbat and its holiness, for this is the foundation of everything”.

My father, my mentor, zya”a used to say, that whatever he requests from Hashem is in the merit of the holiness of Shabbat, for if one observes Shabbat as is expected of us, it’s merit is exceedingly great.



Words of our Sages

Fighting one’s Desire

“Take from yourselves a portion for Hashem” (Shemot 35:5)

The Gaon Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik zt”l, once travelled to Minsk on behalf of the Yeshiva of Volozhin, which was in dire financial straits. In Minsk lived two of the yeshiva’s gabbaim, remarkable Torah personalities who excelled in their yirat shamayim and generosity.

When Rabbi Chaim arrived, he went to the house of one of the gabbaim and told him of the reason for his visit. Even though the sum that he was seeking to raise was enormous, the gabbai nevertheless promised Rabbi Chaim that he would take care of the matter. On hearing this generous offer, Rabbi Chaim remained in the gabbai’s home and spent his time learning Torah.

After some time had passed, Rabbi Chaim asked his host how the fundraising for the yeshiva was progressing. He replied that he has already procured half the amount.

Rabbi Chaim was extremely happy to hear the good news and went back to his learning.

About a month later, Rabbi Chaim asked the gabbai if he had been able to obtain the rest of the amount. He replied that indeed he now has the entire sum. Rabbi Chaim rejoiced and returned to Volozhin to repay the yeshiva’s debts.

A short while later, the two gabbaim came to the Rabbi Chaim for a din Torah. The ‘offender’ was the very gabbai who had collected the entire sum that the yeshiva required in order to repay its debts.

The second gabbai presented a serious complaint against him: “I take a stand against this gabbai who gave Rabbi Chaim the entire amount from his own money! We have always been faithful partners in all our mitzva dealings; I, too, wish to donate half the sum from my money so that I can be a partner in this worthy mitzva...

When Rabbi Chaim heard that that Gabbai had given the entire amount from his own pocket, he asked him, “If this is the case, why did you keep me in your house for over a month; why did you not give me the money straight away?”

This is what the benevolent gabbai answered: “Do you think it is so easy to give away such a large sum of money? In order to part with half the amount I had to work on myself in order to conquer my natural desire for money, and after that I continued with my inner battle until I convinced myself to give the other half”!

The words of this noble gabbai clarify for us the intention of the verse in using the expression, “take from yourselves”. A person is required to work on himself to donate wholeheartedly for Hashem. When donating for the Mishkan, this feeling was especially important, since the Torah required that only one whose heart motivated him should give. This is why the donors were required to “take from themselves”.



The Haftarah

“Yehoyada then sealed the covenant” (Melachim II, 11:17)

The connection to the parsha: The haftarah talks about the shekalim which Bnei Yisrael donated for the upkeep of the Beit Hamikdash, which is related to this week, Parshat Shekalim, the Shabbat on which one announces about the shekalim that the Bnei Yisrael donated for the Beit Hamikdash.

Askenazim read from “Yehoash was seven years old” (ibid, 12:1)



Guard Your Tongue

The Correct Way to Respond

If someone approaches you to tell you about something that your friend did, and you realize that he wishes to tell you something negative, you should ask straight away if this matter is necessary for you to know for the future, or maybe because he will accept your rebuke?

If he answers in the positive, it is permissible to listen, but you must not believe the facts until you yourself clarify the matter. But if you understand from his answer that there is no benefit in you knowing about this matter, or you realize that he is wickedly making up stories because he hates him, you are forbidden to listen to what he wishes to tell you.



Pearls of the Parshah

Take a Look at Your Week

“On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you” (Shemot 35:2)

‘The Sandlar’, Rabbi Moshe Yakov Rabikov zt”l, explains this commandment with a mashal:

When one describes someone as being a Rosh Yeshiva, the intention is that he is considered the ‘head’, the chosen one, out of all the talmidim of the yeshiva. Similarly, an ‘Av Beit Din’ is the elected and greatest of all the dayananim. Lehavdil, the title ‘Chief Thief’, implies that this person is the worst and most corrupt of the entire group.

In the Shabbat prayer we say, “‘Most coveted of days’, You called it”. Shabbat is the most superior day of the week, but in order to know if this is an honorable description or chalilah, the opposite, we have to look at how a person behaves during the other six days. If he is immersed in Torah learning and lives a life of Torah and mitzvot, then the epithet ‘most coveted of days’ is a noble description. But if, chalilah, a person wastes his time and occupies himself with shameful deeds and bad middot, then the description of Shabbat as ‘chemdat yamim’ is a disgrace and embarrassment for Shabbat.

This is what the verse is hinting to: “These are the things that Hashem commanded, to do them: On six days...” If, during the six days one behaves in the appropriate manner, then “...the seventh day shall be holy for you” – he will climb even higher and will become sanctified from the holiness of Shabbat.

What Interests a Shoemaker?

“To weave designs, to work with gold, silver and copper” (Shemot 35:32)

The unique wisdom of those who made the Mishkan was that they knew how to weave designs.

There is a question that begs to be asked – was this their singular remarkable wisdom, that they knew how to weave designs?

The Saba of Kelm zt”l explains by bringing the mishna, “Who is wise? He who learns from every person” (Avot 4:1). He explains that when a shoemaker sees someone walking in the street, the first thing that he notices is his shoes. Similarly a tailor’s gaze will be drawn to a person’s clothes, for that is his profession. His sense for that particular trade draws his attention to that item; maybe he can learn something from the way it is designed.

When we notice someone closely observing someone else, checking his shoes, or his suitcase, it is a sign that this is the line of his profession.

So it is with a person’s intelligence. One who learns from every person, is showing that he has the capacity to take the benefit that each person has to offer, it shows that he longs for wisdom – “from all my teachers I grew wise” (Tehillim 119:99). This is the meaning of the Chazal, “Who is wise? He who learns from every person”. The fact that he learns from each person is a sign that he is clever!

When Does a Carpenter Receive his Wages?

“Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! – they had done it as Hashem had commanded, so they had done! And Moshe blessed them” (Shemot 39:43)

Would it not have been more appropriate for Moshe to bless them only once the Mishkan had been set up, for only then would it be clear how meticulous they had been in constructing everything according to the exact instructions fitting for their placement in the Mishkan? What was the urgency to bless them on the completion of each piece of work, before the Mishkan was set up in its entirety?

Rabbi Gavriel Zev Margaliot points out that the way of the world is that when a carpenter accepts a job, for example to make doors and windows, even once he has finished the construction, he will not receive the entire sum that he has been promised, until the doors and windows are secured in their place in the building, for it could be that when setting them in place some slight adjustments might be necessary.

However, with the work of the Mishkan this was not so since all their work was accompanied by Divine assistance, as the verse tells us: “He filled them with a wise heart to do every craft” - to complete each piece of work according to its exact measurements and requirements. Therefore it was clear that when setting up the Mishkan there would be no need for any adjustments.

Therefore Moshe Rabbeinu did not hold back the blessing that they deserved until the mishkan was completed, but as soon as “Moshe saw the entire work, and behold! – they had done it as Hashem had commanded” – without any deviation, this was immediately followed by “And Moshe blessed them”.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik,
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitza



On Entering and Leaving

“The entire assembly of the Children of Israel went out from Moshe’s presence” (Shemot 35:20)

Moshe Rabbeinu gathered all the people together in an open space, for there was no place big enough to house all of them. This gives rise to a difficulty because if so, once he finished speaking with them, it does not seem appropriate to use the expression “went out”?

The ‘Ohr Pnei Moshe’ addresses a different detail:

Why does the verse say that they left Moshe’s presence and not Hashem’s presence? For Hashem’s glory fills the entire world and it is impossible to take leave of it, therefore the verse stresses from Moshe’s presence.

However, this still leaves us to explain the use of the expression “went out”.

The following mashal can help us understand. When a person goes to a tzaddik for a bracha or to ask advice, he enters the room concerned and distressed, and once he hears words of encouragement and blessing, he feels encouraged and relieved and he is noticeably calmer. It is obvious that the way he enters the room and the way he leaves, is with an entirely different feeling.

This is what happened with the Bnei Yisrael; they sinned with the Golden Calf and waited apprehensively for Moshe to descend after being with Hashem. What did Hashem tell Moshe? What was in store for them? They were concerned and anxious. When Moshe came down the day after Yom Kippur which fell on a Tuesday, he gathered all the people together (Wednesday) and told them that Hashem had commanded to build the Mishkan and bring gold and silver and through that they would atone for the Golden Calf. On hearing this, Am Yisrael were greatly encouraged- Hashem was willing to forgive them and will rest His shechina among them. Over the next two days, Thursday and Friday, the people set about bringing their donations. They were commanded not to bring donations on Shabbat for building the Mishkan does not take precedence to observing Shabbat. Therefore the verse uses the term, “they went out from Moshe’s presence”, for now when they left him they were in a different shape than when they had entered.

This teaches us an important lesson: When a person begins praying or learning, it cannot be that after praying he remains in the same state and with the same thoughts that he entertained before the tefillah. On the contrary, he must bring himself to a more joyful state for “The orders of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart” (Tehillim 19:9)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



History is Replete with Wise-hearted Women

“Every wise-hearted woman spun with her hands” (Shemot 35:25)

In the city of Worms, on Isru Chag of Succot (sometimes a day or two after), the women had a custom to gather in the courtyard of the Beit Haknesset between Mincha and Ma’ariv, by the entrance to the ezrat nashim, dressed in their finest festive clothing.

Most of the women, especially the adolescent girls, would join hands and circle the courtyard singing “Yigdal” and other songs that one sings in honor of a chatan and kallah, all in honor of the Torah.

Then the women would enter the ezrat nashim, where one of the adolescent boys would announce the mitzvot of the women for the entire year and negotiate their selling. These obligations included: cleaning and organizing the Beit Haknesset, folding the tablecloths and coverings of the Sifrei Torah, preparing the wicks and lighting the candles and drawing water for washing hands in the courtyards of the men and women.

The money that the women paid in exchange for the honor of performing these tasks, was not given over to the gabbaim; instead two pious ladies were appointed to be responsible for the money, which they used to buy wax to light candles in the ladies section throughout the year.

Men of Faith

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

The Laundered Suit

In the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim’s house, there is an oil candle burning constantly for the elevation of the tzaddik’s soul. It is in the room where Rabbi Chaim used to learn Torah together with Eliyahu Hanavi. Many people come to visit this room to study Torah or pray there. Whoever wishes can add oil to the burning candle. There are those who consider this a special segulah.

R’ David Loyb wanted to add oil to the burning candle. He entered the room and filled the candle holder and prayed there. Meanwhile, one of the grandsons of the tzaddik, who lived in the house, came into the room. A petty argument erupted between the two, and in a fit of rage, the grandson took the cup full of oil and spilled it over R’ Loyb’s head.

R’ Loyb was wearing a gray suit and a white shirt. He was drenched with oil, which stained his suit from top to bottom.

He stalked out of the room and headed straight to the police station. He intended to file a complaint against the grandson of the tzaddik.

When he arrived at the station, he found the policemen eating lunch. He approached one of the officers and requested to file a complaint. The policeman looked at him, surprised at his disheveled and dirty appearance. “Mr. Loyb, what happened to you?”

After R’ Loyb finished describing what had occurred in the tzaddik’s house, the policeman told him, “Look, we are in the middle of our break. Come back in an hour and then I will write a report about the incident.”

When R’ Loyb returned home, his wife could not believe her eyes. He told her what had happened, but despite his mortification, she advised him, “Forget about your complaints and go wash up.”

R’ Loyb took off his suit and shirt and draped them over a chair in the kitchen. He took a shower, prayed Ma’ariv, and before getting into bed, told his wife that early in the morning he would go to the police station to file a complaint.

That night, he dreamed that the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim appeared to him and told him, “My son, do not go

tomorrow morning to file a complaint at the police station.”

R’ Loyb woke up with a start. However, fatigue overcame him, and he fell back asleep. Again, Rabbi Chaim appeared to him in his dream and told him a second time, “My son, do not go tomorrow morning to the police station to file a complaint.”

In the morning, R’ Loyb prepared to go to the Beit Haknesset to pray. He was taken completely by surprise by what he beheld in the kitchen. He could not believe his eyes and was convinced that he was still dreaming. He screamed to his wife to come at once. She came in alarm and asked her husband, “David, what happened?”

R’ Loyb pointed at the chair, and then his wife, too, could not believe her eyes. The suit was draped over the chair clean and pressed, without a drop of oil on it. It looked brand new, as if it had been bought on that day. On the table lay his shirt, folded and freshly starched.

R’ Loyb witnessed the wonders before him and realized that they could have occurred only through the powers of the tzaddik.