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Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon 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"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

The Main Part of the Mitzvah is its Essence

Every G-dly commandment that was given to us not only has an external visible enactment of the mitzvah, but also encompasses many meanings and multilayered secrets. The precious mitzvot with which the festival of Succot is enveloped, also contain important messages for us. The Mishna tells us, "A dry lulav is pasul (unfit)." The Admor of Belz zy"a offers a reason and allusion for this law: The lulav symbolizes the spine- the most central part of a human being which supports the entire body. Just as a lulav may not be dry, so it is forbidden for a person's service of Hashem to be 'dry' and when he prays to his Creator, his prayer should not simply be a compulsive expression of his lips – he is here, yet his head is somewhere else completely. If this is the case, Hashem has a claim against him and says (Yeshaya 29:13): "With its mouth and with its lips it has honored Me, yet it has distanced its heart from Me". This kind of person is considered as dead since his spine is paralyzed and therefore a dry lulav is unfit to be used for the mitzvah.

The etrog symbolizes the heart. Just like an etrog must be whole and perfect and even a small hole or imperfection renders it unfit, so the heart must be wholly for the service of Hashem, without any imperfection. When is the heart considered whole? Precisely when it is broken and subdued before Hashem. The Kotzker Rebbe expressed this idea in the following astute manner: "There is nothing more intact than a broken heart". Similarly, the hadass that symbolizes the eyes and the arava that is compared to the lips, teaches us that a person must know to be watchful and not allow his evil inclination to persuade him to open his mouth with negative words or to look at forbidden sights, rather he should protect them and preserve them for Hashem's honor.

Just by sitting in the succah one can absorb so much pure faith, for when we spend time in the shelter of the succah, we prove that we are under Hashem's protection, and He is the One who watches over us and takes care of our every lack, and everything emanates from His open Hand. Even if the simplest person decides to trust in Hashem with true faith and believes in Him with his entire heart, Hashem will fulfill his wishes.

This is actually the entire goal of the commandment to sit in the succah. To absorb its holiness and derive its moral message until the person himself transforms into a walking succah, with the Shechina covering him and fear of Hashem dwelling within. The actual eating, drinking and sleeping in the succah are not the essential part of the mitzvah but it is the inner content that is of central importance.

One who fulfills the mitzvah of succah without thought and without the correct intention, he sits, eats, sleeps and enjoys himself in the succah, performing all of this with no heart, will not experience any essential change or feeling of extra closeness to Hashem and will not achieve the main goal of the commandment.

I remember that when my father and teacher Rabbeinu Moshe Aharon Pinto zya"a, experienced a stroke at the end of his life, even though he no longer recognized people, nevertheless there were three things that he was not prepared to give up: Firstly, when his kippah fell off his head he would immediately ask that it should be replaced. Secondly, as soon as he awoke he asked someone to wash his hands and thirdly, he would ask that someone lay tefillin for him and was not at peace until his wishes were fulfilled.

He did not yield concerning these mitzvot since he merited that his body had become a walking succah. He became accustomed to having the Shechina reside above his head and the mitzvot became like second nature for him, therefore his body ran to perform mitzvot even when his mind was no longer lucid, his body knew what it had to do. How does one achieve this state? Only through performing the mitzvot with thought and contemplation, to understand what Hashem requires from us concerning each mitzvah and to derive the maximum benefit from that mitzvah.

I received a phone call from someone in America. He wished to ask my opinion on which color he should choose for the private plane that he was about to purchase, an expense of upward of fifty million dollars... I answered him, "This is foolish! This is your concern? What will the external look add? Rather try to improve and enhance the inside of the plane for this is of much greater importance. Be concerned about the safety of the airplane and check that it has a strong motor. This incident brought me to contemplate the Chazal on the importance of enhancing the succah, as it says, "This is my G-d and I will build Him a Sanctuary". The Gemara explains that the Hebrew word for 'Sanctuary' (Anveihu) can also mean 'to beautify', implying that one should beautify the mitzvot. Thus a person after going through the Holy Days, must transform his entire being into a beautiful and kosher succah, in order to merit the Shechina resting permanently in him. This is on the condition that he is detached from materialism which ties him to the ground, which is the reason why a succah that is covered with s'chach that is still attached to the ground is considered unfit.

It is the same idea with fulfilling the mitzvot. The main part of the commandment of succah is not its external beauty, rather its essence is absorbing the holiness that it contains, inside our neshamot, and through this we will merit closeness to Hashem and an increase in our yirat shamayim.

May it be His will that Hashem give us the merit to perform each commandment in its entirety and to understand the message that it contains, for this is the entire goal of the mitzvot. Amen!



Walking in their Ways

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

The Cover, Not the Bottle

Some time ago when we travelled to Russia in order to pray by the gravesites of the tzaddikim, we travelled by bus for two days, without proper sleeping and food arrangements. Although the physical conditions were minimal, the atmosphere was most elevated. During the trip I encouraged the people with thought provoking lectures and told stories about the way of life of the tzaddikim whose graves we visited, and the miracles that they performed. All this served to warm their hearts and inspire them.

On the second day I noticed that they brought a big crate of water bottles, which were covered with a label depicting an immodest woman. They placed these bottles on all the holy places that we visited and then started distributing the bottles to each one of the group, so that it should serve as a segulah and souvenir of these holy places.

When I saw each of them holding a bottle, I cried out, "What are you doing?!" They did not understand what I wanted from them and explained: "Honorable Rav, we will drink from this bottle on Rosh Hashana and on the Chagim, we will place it on the table as a segulah, they are bottles that have absorbed blessings from the holy places that we visited."

One of them went even further and said: "Honorable Rav, the bottle is closed and there is nothing wrong with it."

"But what about the picture on the bottle?" I explained my concern.

"What about it?"

I saw that they were not in line with my thoughts. So I explained: "Could you imagine this woman approaching me for a blessing?" "G-d forbid", they replied. "It would certainly be inappropriate for her to come to the Rav dressed in this manner."

"And all the holy tzaddikim that you prostrated yourselves by their graves, would agree to this thing?! They battled the klipot their entire lives and fought against immorality. Now you wish that this water should hold a segulah from the power of these tzaddikim...?"

They finally understood the message. The reason why they did not comprehend until I explicitly explained the issue, was because they were accustomed to living in an immodest lifestyle, to the extent that they no longer saw it as something detrimental. Just like we have explained that one who becomes accustomed to performing aveirot is considered like a blind person for he no longer knows how to differentiate between good and bad.

Wishing to rectify their deeds they asked me what to do. I told them that each person should remove the wrapper from his bottle in order to discard the impurity. As they stood there in front of me, they tore off the wrapper and removed the impurity, leaving the bottle free of uncleanness.

Our Ukranian bus drive witnessed this incident and expressed his surprise at what was going on. One of the group explained the issue of impurity and immodesty that was involved. Nevertheless, he could not comprehend our actions and felt personally insulted, to the extent that he bent down and picked up all the torn pieces of the wrappers and kept them next to him r'l.

The Haftarah

"It shall be on that day" (Yechezkel 38, 39)

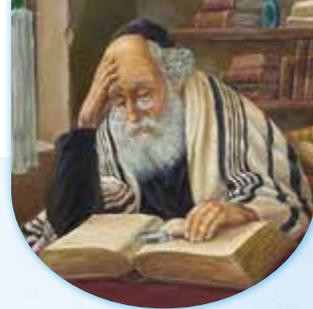


The connection to the Chag: The Haftarah speaks about the war of Gog and Magog which will take place at the end of time, and the Sages have told us that this war will take place on Succot.

Guard Your Tongue

Who Bought the Merchandise?

If a person asks a store owner to hold onto a certain product for him for a short time until he comes to pay for it, but meanwhile someone else comes and buys this item, the store owner is forbidden to reveal the identity of this person, since it serves no purpose. Even if the store owner makes it clear that the one who bought the item is not guilty since he did not know that the product had been put away for someone else, it is still forbidden to reveal his identity.



Words of our Sages

Every Year We Reach New Heights

The Maggid Rabbi Yakov Galinsky zt"l told over:

At the beginning of the Elul zman, after finishing to pray, the Chafetz Chaim stood up and announced to the bachurim: "They will soon start picking etrogim for Succot."

Since etrogim did not grow in Poland, they would be imported from countries that had a warmer climate and many would become spoilt on the way. At times the value of a quality etrog would reach ten rubles, which today is equivalent to a thousand shekel. Sometimes the price was even steeper. There were communities that could only afford to buy one etrog, which all the townspeople would share.

"The mitzvah of etrog is a Torah obligation on the first day of the Chag only. During the rest of the chag, the mitzvah is a rabbinical obligation. Yet for one mitzvah, one pays a thousand shekel!

The Vilan Gaon zt"l writes (Shenot Eliyahu, beg. of masechet Pe'ah), that every word of Torah that one studies is considered as fulfilling a positive Torah commandment. I made the following calculation," the Chafetz Chaim continued: "In one minute one can say two hundred words, which means that one earns two hundred thousand shekel! In one hour one can say twelve thousand words, which amounts to twelve million shekel!

The Yerushalmi says that all the Torah commandments are not equal to one word of Torah, meaning one saying, meaning one word. According to this, when learning Torah one receives a reward equal to seven milliard, three hundred and fifty six million shekel!

How many mitzvot can one amass in approach of the Day of Judgement, just by learning diligently without a break, by not wasting time during the study sessions and even adding to one's regular study times! "

After this short and powerful speech, one of the older bachurim approached the Chafetz Chaim and commented that he said this same speech last year...

"Not to the same bachurim" was the Chafetz Chaim's reply.

"There are new bachurim, it is true, but most of us already heard this..."

"Blessings to you!" said the Chafetz Chaim kindly. "I have a question for you. Every year they honor ploni with 'Chatan Torah' and ploni with 'Chatan Bereishit'. Last year they were honored, and the year before that too, and this year they will be honored again, and next year. Do you think this is correct? We have already expressed our appreciation to them, is it not right that other people should be honored? There are other people who deserve this honor..."

The bachur was quiet. He had nothing to say in answer to the Chafetz Chaim's claim.

"I will tell you the reason. This year they will be honored for the first time!"

"The first time? How is this possible, they were chosen last year, and two and three years ago too!"

"You must understand that these were not the same people who were honored. They might look the same, but meanwhile they studied Torah for another year, developed themselves and grew in spiritual heights. And the Torah is a creative force, it creates and crystalizes and improves and transforms: This is in line with the verse, "You shall observe My decrees and perform them (ועשיתם אותם)" (Vayikra 20:8), on which the Gemara (Sanhedrin 99b) points out: "Do not read it "them" (אותם) but "you" (אתם), implying, 'as if you have made yourselves' (עשיתם את עצמכם). These people are like new beings and this is why they deserve to be honored with 'Chatan Torah' and 'Chatan Bereishit'.

So now you understand, the bachurim who heard this speech last year, absorbed its implication according to their level at that time, but the words did not have the appropriate effect. Meanwhile a year passed. They became older and rose in Torah heights and thereby became different people, so these same words will now have a different connotation for them and will have an effect accordingly!"



QUILL OF THE HEART

The following is a sacred piyut, from Rabbi Chaim Pinto about the lengthy galut that we have lived out among the nations, penned from the pure

לעומתי בן שפחתי, ניצב לריב איתי
 קשתו דרוכה לירות תם, פתאום במסתרים
 הנה בניך בעתם, צר בדברים זרים
 למה אלוקים עזבתם, פזורים בהרים
 א-ל נאמן הר הנסמן, המזומן. תנה, לעם לא אלמן.
 חשתי ולא התמהמהתי, לעבוד עבודתי
 ודבר סופרים וחידותם, הלוא הם ספורים
 נפשי יצאה על דברתם, עמי הם צרורים
 הלוא המה כמו חותם, על לבי קשורים
 א-ל נאמן הר הנסמן, המזומן. תנה, לעם לא אלמן.
 יצאתי חוץ למחיצתי, עניה סוערה
 אני כשה בין זאבים, רשעים אכזרים
 ויש לי כמה ערבים, תמימים וישרים
 הלוא המה כתובים, מילדי העברים
 א-ל נאמן הר הנסמן, המזומן. תנה, לעם לא אלמן.
 יוקם אכזר בן אמת, בזעם ועברה
 ועמך קהל נדיבים, יאירו במאורים
 מה להם עוד לעצבים, איך קץ הדרורים
 ארך והם ביד שובים, נתונים ומסורים
 א-ל נאמן הר הנסמן, המזומן. תנה, לעם לא אלמן.
 מי יתן אשוב אל ביתי, עיר המעטירה
 מעלותיה מרובים, כמה מפוארים
 בימינך תקבל שבים, טהורים ושמורים
 ושפוך חמתך על אויבים, השקמו תמרורים
 א-ל נאמן הר הנסמן, המזומן. תנה, לעם לא אלמן.

Treasures

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



He Created the Remedy Before the Malady

One of the foundations of emunah is that a person must believe that there is no such thing as a chance happening, every step that a person takes in this world is determined by Divine intervention from Hashem Yitbarach.

Before our trip to Morocco for the hilula of Rabbi Chaim Pinto zya"n in Morocco, I noticed that my wife tchy' had put her personal siddur in my bag. This is something that she has never done and I could not fathom her reason for doing this.

On the day of the hilula we arrived at the kever of the tzaddik where crowds of people had already gathered, including distinguished representatives of the King of Morocco. As is my custom, on this occasion I want to bless the Moroccan king with the traditional blessing "He who grants salvation to the kings" and this ceremony will be transmitted by television to thousands of people around the country. I started to look for my siddur in order to recite the blessing but I could not find it.

You are certainly imagining my embarrassment at not having a siddur from which to bless the king, while all the assembled are waiting with baited breath to hear my voice. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu, yishtabach shemo la'ad, created the remedy before the malady and made my wife's tchy' think of placing her siddur in my bag. From this siddur my salvation sprouted and with it I blessed the king and was thus saved from great embarrassment.

This is just one example of how there is no such thing as a coincidence. We must believe that everything is reckoned with exactness according to Hashem's calculation. May it be His will that we be able to strengthen and consolidate our pure faith in the Creator of the world.



INYANEI D'YOMA (TIMELY MESSAGE)

Thanking Hashem for the Showerhead

'Chag Ha'asif', the Festival of the Ingathering, is designated as a festival due to it being a time of ingathering. At this time of the year our ancestors would put their crop into storage, and this was their means of income for the coming year. In our terms we can define it as a 'yearly wage', as if once a year we receive wages for the entire year.

Since by nature, beholding one's abundance and full storehouses brings a person great joy, this time of ingathering was fixed as a festival for Hashem. The Torah was concerned for Klal Yisrael that they should not forget their Creator. "Beware for yourself lest you forget Hashem" (Devarim 6:12). Therefore, every year at this time of gathering in the produce, when one is faced with all the abundance, the Torah commands: Take the ingathering and with it enter the succah. We should take the crop and run with it to the succah – to reflect on Who gave us all this and rejoice with Him. "I will rejoice intensely with Hashem, my soul will exult with my G-d". Today when we talk about our 'harvest', we do not refer to the simple meaning of the words. Most of us are not farmers and we are not occupied with gathering in the harvest from the fields. In our times it has a different connotation. Our ingathering is our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, and all the abundance that Hashem has blessed us with.

Harav Asher Druk shlita points out in his sefer 'Doresh Tov', that our 'ingathering' includes simple things that we are all aware of, yet until today we did not pay too much attention to them. Are we aware of how many times a day our heart beats? The majority of people do not know that each person's heart beats one hundred and fifteen thousand times each day! According to this calculation, how many times does the heart beat in one month? Three million four hundred and fifty thousand! And in a year? Forty-one million, four hundred thousand!

Chazal say on the verse: "Let all souls (המשנ) praise G-d" that for every single breath (המישנ) one must thank Hashem! How long would it take us to say tens of millions of times 'Thank You'? This is only enough 'thank you's' for one year, and we are much older than one year of age! And in general, what about all the members of our families? Try and make a calculation according to the number of people in your family bli ayin hara, the number of people multiplied by the number of heartbeats. Would you even know where to put the comma in the calculation?!

Did you ever think how much a heart is worth? In America the cost for a heart transplant is a million dollars. I tried to figure out how much one's own heart is worth, but I did not succeed. It has no price tag! But a million dollars it is definitely worth.

For how many years have your lungs been working? It is a machine that works day after day and never goes on strike! Wonder of wonders! The lungs do an excellent job. What about your kidneys? Did you ever hear of dialysis? Maybe it is worth going to see people who are connected to a dialysis machine. Your 'asher yotzar' prayer will definitely be affected!

What about your digestive system? Does everything function as it should? What about your liver? Gall bladder? Pancreas? Show me another machine in the world, as updated as it may be, that is capable of working twenty-four hours a day for years on end...

The 'Yesod V'shoresh H'avodah' wrote in his will that every day he would thank Hashem for everything that he had. He wrote the version

that he would say: "My Designer and Creator, may Your Name be blessed, I give praise and thanks that you gave me such and such..." He said this for every single thing that he had in his life! He added that he committed this to writing because he does not wish this service of Hashem to cease once he leaves this world. If a person cannot find the words in our formal prayers to thank for a certain thing, he should express his gratitude in his own words.

The Rambam writes: "The rule is that a person should always cry for the future and beg for mercy, and give thanks for the past and thank and praise according to his capabilities, and the more one thanks Hashem and praises Him always, the more praiseworthy he is." We should find a corner, close the door, and say: "Ribono Shel Olam, thank you! I sincerely thank you. You gave me hands!" The sefarim write that there are certain pleasures for which no blessings were established, for example the pleasure of bathing. But why enjoy this world without a blessing? It is possible to take a drink and recite the blessing 'shehakol' and have in mind also the pleasure of bathing. At this opportunity one can also have in mind our appreciation for the tap, the shower, the warm water and its pleasant flow.

One can also bless Hashem when hearing music. Before turning on the music one can take a drink, recite 'shehakol' and have in mind the music which one is about to enjoy.

There is a segula to say seventy-two times "הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם", "Give thanks to Hashem for He is good", and each time to have a different kindness in mind and then to ask for a particular request – and one merits receiving that blessing. I do not know the source for this segula but the idea behind it is clear. Thanking, gives the person the merit to receive additional blessings. Someone told that he sat down with his family to perform this segula. They originally thought that it would be hard to find seventy-two things to thank for, but once they finished they said, seventy-two is too little! It is easy to arrive at a higher number!

On the Chag of Succot, the time of "when you gather in from your threshing floor and from your wine cellar", each one of us must make a reckoning of our personal 'harvest', including the atonement that we merited on Yom Kippur, and thank for it. Although the materialism of this world is simply futilities and this world is only a temporary world, we must nevertheless thank for everything that we have been given, and this automatically brings us to great joy. We are joyful knowing Who watches over us, Who showers us with all this abundance and Who loves us so dearly.

We should remember to thank and we should remember that to the extent that a person blesses Hakadosh Baruch Hu, so Hashem will bless him! May Hashem give all of us the merit to bless, praise and thank Him always, and the more one thanks Hashem the more praiseworthy one is.

