

Nitzavim  
Vayeilech

September 12<sup>th</sup> 2020  
23<sup>rd</sup> of Elul 5780

869



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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# 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

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á

MASKIL LEDAVID

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



## Mentioning the Merit of the Avot During the Days of Awe

**"And you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, and listen to His voice, according to everything that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and all your soul"** (Devarim 30:2)

During the Days of Awe, a person arrives at a recognition of the truth and a clarity of Hashem's Omnipresence which compels him to repent and return to Hashem his G-d. We have a tradition that during the Days of Awe of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Heavenly presence hovers over Bnei Yisrael and it has the power of influencing man and rousing him to repent, as the Rambam tells us (Hilchot Teshuva 3:4), "Wake up you slumbering ones from your sleep and sleeping ones awaken from your deep sleep". Moreover, that Heavenly spirit that is present during the days of Awe assists man in purifying and cleansing himself from his sins. More than just rousing us to repent, it actually assists us in cleansing ourselves from our sins.

This can be compared to someone whose body has become filthy with mud. To cleanse himself he must take soap and water and wash well. The dirtier he is, the more effort he must invest in scrubbing himself. So too, a person who blemished his body through sins and iniquities, has dirtied his body, spirit and soul. How can he stand before the Creator in this way? Even if he repents sincerely, some impression from the sins will still remain. But when Hashem recognizes his desire to come closer to Him and repent sincerely, He digs a tunnel for him under the Throne of Glory and a great light emerges from this opening so that the prayer of the penitent can go straight to Hashem and be accepted by Him, without the Angels of Destruction intercepting the prayer and preventing it from being heard and accepted by Hashem.

On contemplation, we will come to the realization that this is an enormous kindness that Hashem performs for His creations, for even though they have sinned and committed crimes against Him, He does not shut His door in their face, but on the contrary, He actually helps them cleanse and purify themselves from their sins by annulling the power of the Angels of Destruction so that they should not provoke prosecution. When a person's prayer is accepted by the Creator, he becomes cleansed from his sin and is now comparable to a new-born baby who has never tasted the taste of sin and to a woman who is purified from her impurity after immersing in a mikveh.

During the Days of Awe Hashem facilitates repentance through the fact that He is close to us, which makes it is easier for us to be inspired by the atmosphere of Holiness. This influence rouses us to seek Hashem's presence. Also, the period of the Chagim is affected by the merit of the Avot who stand by the side of those who repent. In particular, we mention the merit of Akeidat Yitzchak (the binding of Yitzchak on the Altar), which teaches us 'true love of Hashem' which Avraham Avinu and his son Yitzchak both demonstrated. Those holy Avot were so close to Hashem Yitbarach with nothing materialistic standing between them, to the extent that they were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the sake of sanctifying His Name.

Referring to Avraham and Yitzchak as they were on their way to the Akeidah, it is written (Bereishit 22:8), "And the two of them went together". The commentaries explain that this expression teaches us that Yitzchak Avinu possessed the attribute of self-sacrifice to the same degree as his father Avraham Avinu, for he too was prepared to give up his life for the sake of fulfilling Hashem's will. So too this expression is a demonstration of the great love that existed between Avraham

and Yitzchak, the same love that united them in their love for Hashem Yitbarach, to the extent that they achieved the level where Hashem, the Torah, and the holy Avot are considered as one.

The great love that existed between Avraham and Yitzchak tells us about the greatness of the sacrifice that they were prepared to carry out for their Creator, for even though they were so deeply attached to one another, they were prepared to take leave of each other as Hashem wished. This shows us that their love for Hashem stood at the forefront of their mind and this is what guided them in all their ways.

Avraham Avinu hurried to fulfill the will of his Creator, as it says (Bereishit 22:3), "So Avraham woke up early in the morning and he saddled his donkey", meaning that he did not wait for his servants to saddle his donkey for him, but because this command from Hashem was so precious to him, he arose early in the morning and saddled the donkey himself so as to hasten the fulfillment of the mitzvah. This is the greatness of the Avot. Their love for Hashem overrode the strong bond between father and son and that is what guided them on their path, for the basis of their mutual love was fear of G-d and fulfilling His will.

During the Days of Awe, a person is obligated to rectify his deeds not only in matters pertaining between him and Hashem, but he must also utilize the influence of holiness that comes as a result of Hashem's close presence to rectify matters between man and his fellow. We must be aware that concerning matters between man and his fellow, the Yetzer Hara has a very strong power and he tries with all his might to prevent a person from rectifying these matters. For when it comes to matters between man and Hashem, the Yetzer Hara can ignore and remain silent, but when it comes to matters between man and his fellow, the Yetzer Hara is aroused and makes a person stumble time and again, for he knows that Hashem forgoes His own honor but does not forgo the honor of his creations. Due to this, these sins are the first to accuse.

The way of the Yetzer Hara is to blur a person's eyes and blind him. He causes him to think that he did not hurt his friend at all and he holds nothing against him. The Yetzer Hara distorts reality and presents it in a different light, as a result, the person does not feel that he must repent and consequently continues to hold on to those sins. And even if he repents concerning matters between man and Hashem, his repentance is lacking and incomplete until he also rectifies those matters between man and his fellow.

The Ba'al Hatanya explains at length in his holy sefarim, that Hashem descending to be with His people during the Days of Mercy and Forgiveness can be compared to a king whose permanent residence is in his palace in the city. Anyone who wishes to see the king may go to the area that overlooks the king's garden, from where he can catch a glimpse of his honorable countenance. But there are special days in the year when the king leaves his palace and goes out to the fields so that even those who live far from the city have the opportunity of seeing him.

So too, Hashem is close to His children throughout the year and anyone who wishes to repent can do so. However, during the Days of Awe Hashem draws even closer to His children, so that also those who are in the fields, meaning those who are far from Him during the year, will be able to return to Him during this time.



## Walking in their Ways

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

### The Moving Mezuzah

On a visit to the USA, someone approached me and related a strange phenomenon. No matter how strongly he nailed the mezuzah to the entrance of his house, it would fall down again. Every time he re-affixed it to the doorpost, it would soon be back on the floor.

Upon hearing about this strange phenomenon, I offered to come and try to put it up myself. That was what I did, making sure that it was firmly attached. After that, I delivered a talk in his home. Suddenly, a noise was heard from the direction of the front door. Sure enough, there was the newly nailed-in mezuzah, resting on the floor.

I picked up the mezuzah and discovered that a piece of the wooden doorpost was stuck to it. This just proved how well the mezuzah had been affixed. The matter was extremely puzzling. How and why did it keep falling? Despite being clueless as to the answer, I put up the mezuzah once again, bonding it tightly with the doorpost. Then I continued my speech that had been interrupted. Only a few minutes passed before we once again heard the light thud of the mezuzah falling.

I understood that there was a Heavenly hand knocking down the mezuzah. I turned to the master of the house and declared, "You are housing a murderer!"

The man turned pale and was filled with shame. He confessed that I was saying the truth. He admitted that when he was a young man in his parents' home, a burglar had crept into the house. Out of fear, he killed the burglar. He had kept the matter hidden for years and had not even shared it with his wife.

I instructed the man on the exact way to rectify this act and atone for his terrible deed. I added that he should fast for the duration of one week, eating only minimally in the evenings.

After one week of rectification, he called to thank me for paving his path to teshuvah. Baruch Hashem, the mezuzah was affixed steadily, not moving an inch.

## The Haftarah

**"I will rejoice intensely with Hashem"** (Yeshaya 61)

The connection to Shabbat: This is the seventh and last of the 'Seven Haftarot of Consolation' that are read starting with the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av.

## Guard Your Tongue

**"And let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun"**

If by not speaking up, a person will only suffer embarrassment but not a monetary loss, it is certainly forbidden to relate the incident and he must not be troubled by this at all. He should know that for this act of remaining silent he will be considered as one of Hashem's beloved, and his face will shine like the light of the sun, as Chazal say, "'Those who are insulted yet do not insult, hear their disgrace yet do not retort' about them the verse says, 'And let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun'".



## In Our Father's Path

### Round Challot for Rosh Hashanah

Readers who did the shopping for Shabbat this week, certainly noticed that the challot were braided in a different shape. From Erev Rosh Hashana every respectable bakery remembers to change the shape and bakes round challot during the month of Tishrei.

It could be that those who bake challot, bakery owners, or consumers are not aware of what lies behind this custom, so for their benefit, we will explain this tradition in the following column.

First of all, it is interesting to note that the classic shape of the challah has its source in the holy sefarim. As we know, for every Shabbat throughout the year and the Chagim we have the custom of braiding long challot, and the Shelah Hakadosh explains the reason for this. During the year challot are baked in the shape of the letter 'vav' so that when cutting the challah one completes the Name of Hashem (ו-ו-ו-ה). The piece of challah that one breaks off has the shape of the letter 'yud', the five fingers of each hand represent the two 'heh's' (the letter 'heh' has the numerical value of five), while the challah itself is shaped like the letter 'vav'.

Some Sephardic communities practice the custom of baking round challot throughout the year, as a reminder of the Manna which was round.

The sefer 'Ta'amei Minhagim' (Likutim 183) explains the reason for the custom of baking round challot beginning with Rosh Hashanah and until after Hoshana Rabba. He quotes the Responsa of the Mahari Asad (Ohrach Chaim 157), who clarifies the reason for baking round matzot on Pesach. During the time that Bnei Yisrael were enslaved in Egypt, the Egyptian law was to form their bread in a square or triangular shape, concurring with the number of gods in which they believed. So in order to distance ourselves from the abominations of Egypt, Bnei Yisrael did the opposite and baked round bread which symbolizes oneness. This is why particularly on Rosh Hashanah which is the foremost time when we declare Hashem as King and affirm His Oneness, Ashkenazim have the custom of baking round challot, and continue to do so until Hoshana Rabba.

The Chatam Sofer zya"l writes that one does so for a good omen since something round has no end which is a good omen for longevity. Some tzaddikim say that the reason is that round challot symbolize a crown, hinting to "And they will present You with a crown of Kingship", as we say in the Rosh Hashanah prayers.

The above reasons clarify why some communities have the custom of baking round challot for all the Shabbatot of the month of Tishrei, while other communities bake them in the regular shape, as they do during the rest of the year.

In addition, we find other customs concerning the shape of the challot that are baked in honor of Rosh Hashanah. Some have the custom to bake the challah in the shape of birds, as is brought in the sefer 'Torat Emet'. He explains that this is done as an omen that Hashem should guard us and protect us, as it says (Yeshaya 31:5), "Like flying birds, so will Hashem, Master of Legions, protect". The chassidim of Square have the custom of adorning the round challot with a knot braided in the shape of a bird.

Some have the custom to bake challot in the shape of a ladder, for on Rosh Hashanah each person is judged, "...who will be impoverished and who will be enriched, who will be degraded and who will be exalted". The Midrash Tanchuma writes that Hashem makes ladders in Heaven, this one He elevates and this one He lowers. Baking challot in the shape of a ladder hints to this idea ('Matamim' pg. 33). Others say that the reason for this custom is as an omen that our prayers should ascend to our Father in Heaven, while it is also brought in 'Minhagei Beit Elik' that some practiced the custom of baking two challot, one in the shape of a bird and the other in the shape of a ladder.



## Pearls of the Parsha

## Treasures

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



### The Number Demonstrates its Veracity

*"You are standing today" (Devarim 29:9)*

Rashi (ibid 12) quotes the Midrash Aggadah: "Why is the Parsha of Nitzavim adjacent to the Admonition? When Bnei Yisrael heard one hundred curses minus two, besides the forty-nine curses that were said in Parshat Vayikra, their faces turned color in fright and they said, who can stand up to these?".

The sefer 'Divrei Shaul' explains that the number 'one hundred-minus-two, and forty-nine [curses]', is an important aspect of the admonition. If one warns someone that he will be struck without enumerating the number of blows, or one uses a round number, for example, 'fifty', or 'one-hundred', one automatically assumes that the number is an exaggeration and not exact. One therefore liberally subtracts from the true number. But if one makes a point of using a number that is not round, it is clear that the number is accurate and constant.

Therefore, since Bnei Yisrael were told one-hundred-minus-two and forty-nine curses, this number demonstrates that it is an exact number, and this is why their faces turned color in fright. Moshe consoled them with "You are standing today" which demonstrates they will not be totally destroyed.

### Is the Main Thing Where One's Heart Lies?

*"He will bless himself in his heart, saying, 'Peace will be with me, though I walk as my heart sees fit'" (Devarim 29:18)*

These words, warns the 'Ktav Sofer', contain a lesson for those who act appropriately with their fellow men yet are sinful to Heaven, and when they are reproved for their sins between man and G-d, they retort that having a "good heart" and showing compassion to others is adequate.

This is the implication of "He will bless himself in his heart". He blesses himself for his good-heartedness and allows himself to say that though I walk as my heart sees fit and perform all kinds of bad deeds, nevertheless 'Peace will be with me', I will be okay. But in fact "Hashem will not be willing to forgive him" (ibid 19) and will punish him for his sins. He will still receive the reward for his good deeds, since 'a mitzvah does not cover up an aveirah', and the opposite is also true.

### Moshe Did Not Wait for Bnei Yisrael to Approach Him

*"Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Yisrael" (Devarim 31:1)*

The commentaries ask why the verse stresses that Moshe went to Bnei Yisrael? Moreover, why did Bnei Yisrael not honor Moshe by going to him?

Rabbi Shimon Chavi zt"l, explains in his sefer 'Noam Siach', that since Bnei Yisrael knew that Moshe had to give over to them the entire Torah with all its six hundred and thirteen mitzvot, and as he had not yet told them about the commandments of Hakhel (the king reads to the entire nation from Sefer Devarim) and writing a Sefer Torah, they therefore did not want to go to Moshe to receive these remaining two mitzvot, for they were afraid that after this Moshe will end his role in This World.

Yet Moshe Rabbeinu did not wish to delay Bnei Yisrael from entering the land, therefore he went to them to teach them these two mitzvot and through this completed the giving over of all six hundred and thirteen mitzvot.

### The Final Decision Lies in the Hands of the Leader

*"For you shall come with this people to the Land" (Devarim 31:7)*

On the words "For you shall come with this people", Rashi writes that Moshe told Yehoshua that the elders of the generation will be with him, meaning that he would share leadership with them and defer to their wisdom and advice. However, Hashem said to Yehoshua "for you shall bring Bnei Yisrael to the Land that I have sworn to them" (ibid 23), bring them against their wish, everything is dependent on you. Take a stick and hit them on the head. For a generation cannot have more than one leader".

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman hy"d asks, how could Moshe Rabbeinu change the words that he was told by Hashem when speaking to Yehoshua and give him a different message?

He answers that both 'messages' are correct. It is certainly true that the leader of the generation must listen to the wisdom and advice of its elders and Sages, and it is forbidden for him to make decisions based on his own opinion alone. But, after hearing all their different opinions, he alone has the authority to decide the correct course of action.

### Fear of the Day of Judgement

I heard in the name of Maran Harav Shach zt"l, that fear of the Day of Judgement is due to the fact that on this day we stand before Hashem, and not just because of the actual judgement. However, there is a difficulty here, for if one must be afraid of just standing before Hashem, why do we not feel this fear the entire year? Maybe we are not fulfilling the imperative of "Know before Whom you stand" (Berachot 28b)?

Chazal tell us (Vayikra Rabba 29:1) that the creation began on the twenty-fifth of Elul, while the verse "You are standing today" (Devarim 29:9) refers to Rosh Hashanah. This being the case, why on Rosh Hashanah do we say "Today is the birth[day] of the world" since Hashem actually began creating the world five days earlier, on the twenty-fifth of Elul?

The answer is that the main goal of creation was for man, and were it not for man, Hashem would have not created the world. Man is considered as 'the whole world', therefore man must constantly feel that the world was created for his sake. It follows that saying "Today is the birth[day] of the world" refers to the creation of man who was created on Rosh Hashanah and for whom the world was created.

These Parshiot of Nitzavim and Vayeilech that are adjacent to each other, seemingly contradict each other in their very essence. 'Nitzavim' implies standing still without moving, while 'Vayeilech' implies walking and movement. However, the essence of these Parshiot is no contradiction. On the contrary, they complement each other. After Bnei Yisrael stand in judgement before Hashem, Hashem then leads each person on his way according to his deeds. If a person is particular to follow the path of Torah and mitzvot, then Hashem leads him on the path of goodness and blessing. But if, G-d forbid, a person sins against Hashem, Hashem deems it necessary to lead him in the path of troubles and curses.

We began by stating that fear of the Day of Judgement is not only due to the actual judgement, but stems from the fact that we are standing before Hashem. This fear must accompany us not only on the Day of Judgement but also throughout the year. The way to feel this fear is by living in accordance with the verse, "I have set Hashem before me always" (Tehillim 16:8).

# MAY HIS MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING



**T**his column is dedicated in honor of the hilula of the Gaon and tzaddik, the miracle worker, Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto (Hagadol) zya"א, which takes place on the twenty-sixth of Elul.

More than one hundred and seventy-five years have passed since the passing of the 'Ner Hama'aravi', the tzaddik and miracle worker, the holy mekubal, the esteemed Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto Hagadol zya"א. The power of his Torah and the intensity of his holiness that found expression in the holy and pure words that he uttered, which wrought miracles and salvations as in the concept, "A tzaddik decrees and the Holy One Blessed Be He fulfills", is in effect still today. Many Jews speak with awe about the great miracles that they merited after praying to Hashem and mentioning the merit of the tzaddik and miracle worker, the esteemed Maran Rabbi Chaim Pinto zya"א.

Chazal have told us, "Tzaddikim are greater after their passing than during their lifetime" and indeed year after year we hear of many great miracles and stories of salvation that believing Jews merit, after coming to visit the gravesite of the tzaddik in Morocco, and praying to Hashem that the merit of the tzaddik zya"א should stand for them for salvation from all kinds of troubles and sorrow, plagues and sickness.

"I will continue to stand before the Holy One Blessed Be He, in prayer, also after my death, just as I did during my lifetime. I will not abandon you in my death as I did not abandon you in my lifetime". These were the last words of the esteemed Maran, the tzaddik and miracle worker, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol zya"א, after speaking passionately to his faithful talmidim in a holy and fiery voice about service and fear of Hashem.

The name of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was lauded among Moroccan Jewry and even beyond. Already in his youth, when he seized for himself a life of Torah and holiness which he absorbed in his holy father's zya"א house, his name and holy spirit crossed borders and deserts, oceans and dry land. The native Arabs also greatly

respected him and considered him a holy miracle worker.

His good name reached far and wide, beyond the borders of Morocco, to Europe and the Middle East. Many times he would receive requests from Jews from far off countries, beseeching him to pray for them and help them merit salvation and annul harsh decrees.

The doors of his home were open at all hours of day and night to one and all, without exception. Rich or poor, prominent or simple, he would make an effort to assist each person who turned to him, as a father caring for his son.

When his esteemed teacher Rabbi Yaakov Bibas zt"ל passed away, the members of the community turned to Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and asked him to fill his position as Rav of Mogador. At first, Rabbi Chaim refused due to his immense humility. However, after much pleading by the community leaders, Rabbi Chaim agreed to fill the position of his holy mentor. He took upon himself to bear the burden of the people in all matters, communal and individual.

Close to midnight, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol would strengthen himself like a lion and begin his schedule of Avodat Hashem.

At that hour, his attendant, Rabbi Aharon ibn-Chaim would fulfill his holy duty of brewing a hot drink for the Rav.

One night, the attendant heard two voices coming from the study of Rabbi Chaim. Rabbi

Aharon thought to himself, "If the Rav has a chavruta in learning Torah tonight, I should also prepare a hot drink for the guest."

Acting upon his noble intentions, he sent in two cups of hot drinks to the Rav.

Upon daybreak, following the Shacharit prayers, Rabbi Chaim called his attendant, Rabbi Aharon, and said to him, "Tell me, please, why did you bring me two hot drinks instead of the usual one?"

"I heard that the Rav was speaking with someone, and I figured that I would honor the guest with a hot drink as well."

The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim nodded his head in silence and gazed at Rabbi Aharon, saying, "Blessed are you, my son, that you merited hearing the voice of Eliyahu Hanavi. His was the second voice that you heard last night. However, I forbid you to reveal this secret to anyone."

Rabbi Aharon honored his Rav's wishes for many years and did not reveal even a hint of what he had heard. When the time came for Rabbi Chaim to depart from the world, Rabbi Aharon felt that he could finally disclose this amazing secret to the followers of the Rav. Wishing to demonstrate the tzaddik's greatness and his wonders, he told them how Eliyahu Hanavi had come to learn as a chavruta with Rabbi Chaim Hagadol while explaining that he had kept the matter a secret at the tzaddik's behest (Shevach Chaim).

