

Rosh Hashanah

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Hilula

1 - Rabbi Ya'akov David Wilovski, the Ridvaz of Slutsk

2 - Rabbi Moshe Cohen, author of 'Zchut Moshe'

3 - Rabbi Ephraim HaKohen, leading mekubal in Yerushalayim

4 - Rabbi Avraham Danzig, author of 'Chayai Adam'

5 - Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag, author of 'Birkat Shalom'

6 - Rabbi Aryeh Leib, the 'Saba of Shpola'

7 - Zevulun ben Ya'akov Avinu a"h

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# 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

## Blocking the Mouths of the Accusers on Rosh Hashanah

In Parshat Vayeirah the Torah tells us that Avraham Avinu and Avimelech entered into a covenant as an eternal sign that Avraham Avinu was the one who dug the well. Rashi brings the Midrash that the shepherds of Avimelech fought over the well (with the shepherds of Avraham) and said, "We dug it." The (shepherds) decided between them, "Whoever approaches the well and the water rises towards them, it is his well." And the waters rose towards Avraham.

This demands an explanation. Avraham Avinu found it necessary to make a covenant with Avimelech for something like digging a well? Being that Avimelech was a Gentile, why did Avraham Avinu see fit to make a covenant with him concerning this matter?

Furthermore, we need to understand the adjacency of the verse that follows "He planted an 'eshel' in Beer Sheva, and there he proclaimed the Name of Hashem, G-d of the Universe" (Bereishit 21:33). What is the connection between the planting of the 'eshel' (meaning either an inn for lodging or an orchard) and Avraham's covenant with Avimelech? And why did he plant the 'eshel' only after making the covenant and not before this incident? Finally, what is the reason for reading this section that talks about the covenant between Avraham and Avimelech, on Rosh Hashanah?

I would like to suggest that the idea of the covenant between Avraham and Avimelech was only a delusion since Avraham Avinu knew that Avimelech and his children will not uphold the covenant, for the nations are not faithful. So why nevertheless did Avraham wish to make this seemingly superficial covenant with Avimelech? In order to restrain the accusation that the leaders of the nations would level against Bnei Yisrael on Rosh Hashanah. The nations of the world come before Hashem and say that they are doing whatever they can to help and assist Am Yisrael, but Bnei Yisrael on their part are not utilizing the abundance that the nations offer them, for their Avodat Hashem.

The nations also claim that while they pray five times a day, Bnei Yisrael do not even fulfill their obligation of the three daily prayers. If so, they are not worthy of Hashem forgiving their sins and inscribing them for life and peace on Rosh Hashanah. The nations have a strong desire to indict Am Yisrael who do not fulfill the conditions of the Torah and its mitzvot. They wish to intensify their accusation, particularly on Rosh Hashanah, in order to prevent Hashem from exonerating Am Yisrael.

This is the reason why we read the section describing the covenant over the well on Rosh Hashanah. We wish to 'remind' Hashem that Avraham Avinu made a covenant with a Gentile so as to pave the way for our

toiling in Torah. Digging the well signifies digging into the depths of the Torah to quench one's thirst, for the Torah is compared to a well of fresh water.

The covenant that Avraham made with Avimelech was similar to the covenant that Ya'akov entered into with Esav. They divided among them the two worlds, with Esav receiving This World with all its pleasures, while Ya'akov Avinu received the Next World. Through Avraham Avinu's covenant with Avimelech, he wished to hint to him that This World belongs to Avimelech, while the well belongs to him. Implying that the Torah which is a well of life belongs to Am Yisrael, and their single wish and aspiration is to delve into the depths of the Torah so as to draw upon its life-giving waters. While the well of Torah belongs to Am Yisrael, all the pleasures of This World belong to Avimelech and the other nations of the world. If so, they should go and concern themselves with the vanities of This World and leave Am Yisrael alone to study Torah without disturbance.

This is why the verse of 'Avraham planted' is adjacent to the covenant. The Hebrew word 'אשל', eshel, is an abbreviation of the words 'אכילה, שיחה (תפילה), לימוד', eating, conversation (i.e. praying) and studying Torah. Meaning, even though the nations try to accuse us, we ask Hashem to open His eyes, so to speak and see how Bnei Yisrael occupy themselves with eating the bread of Torah, and invest themselves in prayer and Torah study. This affords them the merit of Hashem shutting the mouths of the accusers and instead judge His beloved children for a good life and for peace.

When we read the section of the covenant between Avraham and Avimelech, we arouse the charge against the nations who broke their side of the covenant and searched in every way to make us neglect digging into the well of Torah and fulfilling 'eshel'. In this way, instead of succeeding in their accusations against us, we arouse their indictment before Hashem.

If despite this the nations still succeed in accusing us on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we close their mouths by reading the sections of the covenant between Avraham and Avimelech and the Akeidah Yitzchak, to show that we are not the guilty ones, but it is they who caused us to be lax in our Avodat Hashem. We therefore ask Hashem to remember the kindness of the Avot, whose merit should protect us for all generations.

This is how Am Yisrael are exonerated before Hashem, and despite all the suffering and afflictions that we have experienced throughout the generations, Am Yisrael are still in existence and "the Eternal One of Israel does not lie".



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Woe to Us from the Day of Judgment

A Jew from New York approached me when I was there receiving the public. "Honored Rav, I have come to part with you, for I don't know if I will ever see you again."

"Why do you say that?" I asked, bewildered.

The man replied that he had been diagnosed with cancer, and the doctors gave him only a few weeks, or months, at the most, to live.

I tried to offer words of encouragement to this broken man. I told him to strengthen his emunah in Hashem, Who can rescind a harsh decree in an instant. But the man insisted that he felt his end was near. His only desire was that I pray to Hashem and ask Him to treat him with mercy and forgiveness, and not call him to task for the many iniquities that he performed during his lifetime.

Suddenly, in the midst of his painful words, he burst into uncontrollable sobs. He began confessing his sins, reiterating, "Woe to me and woe to my soul! What shame awaits me on High!"

When I heard these words, I was thunderstruck. This was exactly what the Vilna Gaon had said immediately before his death, that the worst form of Gehinnom in the World to Come will be the shame one feels when his sins are revealed. With his confession, this man merited aiming at the words of the Vilna Gaon.

"Tell me," I asked the man, "Why didn't you consider this shame years ago, before being diagnosed with cancer?"

The man fell silent.

There is no doubt that throughout his life, this man was held captive by his Yetzer Hara. Only now, when death was staring him in the face, was he suddenly enlightened by the unvarnished truth. He then felt the urge to search his soul. Now that he felt the severity of his sins, they filled his heart with fear of the upcoming judgment. He was truly worried about his pitiful soul and how he would bear the shame that would be his lot in the World to Come.

## The Haftarah

First day of Rosh Hashanah: We read the section **"There was a certain man"** (Shmuel I, 1,2) that speaks about Chana the prophetess who was childless and how Hashem remembered her and blessed her with a son. This is the same topic as the Torah reading, where we read about how Hashem remembered Sarah Imeinu who was also childless and blessed her with a son. Chazal tell us that both Sarah and Chanah were remembered on Rosh Hashanah.

Second day of Rosh Hashanah: We read the section **"Thus said Hashem: 'This people...found favor'"** (Yirmiya 31), where the Navi prophesizes that Hashem will have mercy on Am Yisrael and remember them for the good. This is the connection to Rosh Hashanah, the day that we blow the Shofar and ask Hashem for mercy and to remember us with a favorable memory before Him.

## Guard Your Tongue

### The Rechilut is Provoked Anew

If Reuven denounced Shimon in front of two people, and one of them transgressed the prohibition of rechilut and revealed the matter to Shimon, the second person must still be careful not to mention the matter to Shimon. It would be even worse were he to emphasize Reuven's words even more than the first one who transgressed. He is forbidden to mention the matter to Shimon because his words will strengthen Shimon's hatred for Reuven. After all, hearing the same thing from two people will make it sink in even more than had he heard it just from one. Besides, because the rechilut is provoked anew, this may also sometimes lead to an argument.



## In Our Father's Path

### Whether as Children [of G-d] or as Servants

There is a story told about the Chatam Sofer's zya"n, who asked his daughter to sew the button that had fallen off his coat. When the daughter returned the coat to her father with the button sewn on tightly, the Chatam Sofer inspected the coat, smiled, and said to his daughter, "It seems to me that it was the servant girl who sewed on the button, and not you..."

The daughter apologized and admitted that indeed the servant girl had sewn on the button, and explained that she had not wanted to postpone the matter despite her busy schedule, so she asked for the servant girl's help. "But tell me, Abba," asked the daughter, "How do you know that it was not I who sewed on the button? The father opened the coat and showed her that on the side of the coat not far from the buttons, there was a small hole... "That tiny hole," the Chatam Sofer explained wisely to his daughter, "I did not ask you to repair. I relied on your astuteness, that certainly when you sew on the button and notice this tear, you will come to the conclusion on your own and repair the hole too.

For it is the way of a daughter that when she sees a hole in her father's garment, she quickly repairs it! But when I noticed that the tear had not been repaired, I understood that probably the button repair had also not been done by you but by the servant girl, who does only what she is told to do and that's it!"

This is the great difference between a servant and a son. The servant is obligated to obey his master and does only what he is explicitly instructed to do. He will not add anything of his own accord, above what he is instructed. Not so the faithful and beloved son. He always adds something in addition to what he was instructed to do, for out of his great paternal love, he will always contemplate on his father's will, also concerning those things that he wasn't specifically asked to do.

It follows from this that the way to merit being judged as children, and thereby merit Hashem's mercy just as a father has mercy on his children, is that we too, in our service of Hashem, should act like a son to his father. We should carry out our actions willingly and with love, not out of coercion like a servant who formally does his duty and no more.



## Timely Tidbits

**"Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal... Because it is a decree for Yisrael, a judgment [day] for the G-d of Ya'akov"**

The Holy 'Tiferet Shlomo' points out that a 'chok' (decree) is a mitzvah that has no reason or explanation. 'Mishpat' (judgment) refers to a mitzvah whose reason we can recognize.

This explains the verse "Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal... Because it is a decree for Yisrael". We Bnei Yisrael do not understand the reason and depth behind the blowing of the Shofar which is considered a 'chok'. But as far as Hashem is concerned, this mitzvah is considered as "judgment for the G-d of Ya'akov", since He knows the reason, and the hidden are for Hashem our G-d.

"Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal"

It is told about the defender of Am Yisrael, the holy Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev zya"l, that when he stood on the bimah just before the blowing of the shofar, he raised his head to the women's section and proclaimed: "Righteous women, your tears have great power! Please wash the shofar that I am holding with your tears, so that I can blow it as is proper and fitting.

**"That our merits increase"**

What kind of request is this? If we wish to increase our merits, we must fulfill more mitzvot and good deeds!

The Gaon Rabbi Yishaya Asher Zelig Margaliot explains the meaning. We are asking that we should merit doing teshuva out of love, about which Chazal say "If teshuva is done with love, intentional sins are transformed into merits". In this way our merits will increase.

He explains the request "Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of merits", in the same manner.

This request is also difficult to understand. If we do not possess merits, how will Hashem be able to inscribe us in the Book of Merits? And if we have merits, then the request is superfluous?

The answer is that the request is that we should merit doing teshuva out of love, and then also our sins will be inscribed in the Book of Merits.

**Three Books Are Opened**

We know that both the righteous and the wicked are inscribed immediately, these for life and these for death, while the intermediate ones wait until Yom Kippur for the confirmation of their fate. The question is, why does Hashem wait with the intermediate ones until Yom Kippur?

The sefer 'Divrei Shaul' answers this question in accordance with the laws of Beit Din, where we are told that if the Dayanim see fit to condemn, it is a mitzvah to postpone the ruling overnight. However, this is only when the ruling of an indictment is unclear, but if the ruling is clear then it is forbidden to wait overnight because of the torment in the postponement of the sentence.

It follows that concerning the complete wicked where it is clear that they are indicted, and concerning true tzaddikim where it is clear that the ruling is in their favor, it is forbidden to delay the ruling, therefore they are immediately written and sealed, these for life and these for death. Whereas since with the intermediate the ruling is not clear, with them it is a mitzvah to 'wait overnight' with the ruling, and this is why their verdict is not sealed immediately, rather Hashem waits until Yom Kippur.

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon  
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### Remembrance of Shofar Blowing When Rosh Hashanah Falls on Shabbat

The Gemarah (Rosh Hashanah 29b) brings the following apparent contradiction. In one verse we are told that Rosh Hashanah is "a remembrance of shofar blasts" (Vayikra 23:24) and in another verse it says "a day of sounding the shofar" (Bamidbar 29:1). The Gemarah answers that one verse refers to Rosh Hashanah that falls on Shabbat and the other verse refers to Rosh Hashanah that falls on a weekday. Since on Shabbat one does not blow the shofar, it is not called "a day of sounding the shofar" but only "a remembrance of shofar blasts". The Sefer 'Beit Ahron' poses the following difficulty: On Succot too, one is forbidden to take the four species when the Chag falls on Shabbat, nevertheless we do not find that on the Shabbat of Succot there is a special mention of not taking the lulav. So why when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat do we need to mention this commemorative sounding?

There is a further difficulty. The Targum Yonatan (Bamidbar 29:1) writes that the reason why we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is that by blowing the shofar the Satan becomes confused and runs away, and in that way, he does not succeed in accusing Am Yisrael. The difficulty is, when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat there is still judgment for Am Yisrael, if so, by not blowing the Shofar on this day, what will confuse the Satan and cause him to flee? How will the accusation be averted?

It seems that this is the reason why we mention a remembrance of the shofar blasts when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat. Just mentioning the shofar blasts is enough to confuse the Satan and cause him to flee, without accusing Am Yisrael who stand in judgment before Hashem. The reason for this is because Hashem considers a positive intention as an actual deed, and since if Hashem would command us to blow the shofar on Shabbat, we would certainly desire to fulfill His will, but we are not doing so only because Hashem has instructed us to just rouse the remembrance of the blasts, this thought of remembering the blasts is considered as if we actually blew the Shofar and is enough to chase away the Satan that he cannot impede us, for Chazal have said (Kiddushin 40a), "Hashem considers a positive intention as a deed".

This idea is far-reaching. If by just commemorating the mitzvah of blowing shofar on Shabbat, it has the powerful effect of chasing away the Satan, if so when a person actually fulfills the mitzvah of blowing the Shofar, how much more so does it have the power of having an effect on a person and enabling him to grow in his Avodat Hashem.

'שבת' (Shabbat) has the same root letters as 'תשובה' (repentance). This implies that the holiness that is present every Shabbat has the power to cleanse a person from any dirt that may have clung to him and help him repent sincerely before his Creator. If on Shabbat Rosh Hashanah, just mentioning the shofar blowing has the power to work against the Satan, so too on every Shabbat when a person leaves behind his weekday occupations and involves himself only in 'תורה', shofar sounding, which can be rewritten as 'תורה ע', referring to the Torah that can be explained in seventy (numerical value of the letter 'ע') ways, how much more so does the power of occupying oneself with Torah on Shabbat have an effect of chasing away the Satan from man, enabling him to elevate and sanctify himself before Hashem.

This is the significant principle that we learn from mentioning a remembrance of the shofar sounding on Shabbat. If it has the power to chase away the Satan, all the more so studying the Torah itself on each Shabbat of the year has the power to act on behalf of the person for the good and bring him closer to Hashem. It is a shame to wait for this opportunity that arrives once in several years when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, to realize to what extent the thought of just mentioning the shofar sounding on Shabbat is beneficial against the Satan. We have the ability to utilize the holiness of Torah study every single Shabbat to sanctify ourselves and grow in Torah and cut ourselves off from the Yetzer Hara who prevents a person from thinking positive thoughts of Torah study and mitzvah observance, which are the principal matters.

# ROSH HASHANAH AT A GLANCE



**A** spiritual exaltation can be discerned on the faces of all during the Days of Judgment of Rosh Hashanah. The shofar blasts rouse our hearts, as in "Wake up slumbering ones from your sleep", and one and all are occupied with gathering merits and defenders who will stand at their side during the trial. But it is surprising to note that in the Holy Torah, Rosh Hashanah is not described as a day of judgment for all mankind. Why is this?

The Kli Yakar asks this question and explains that the reason is so that a person should not follow his heart randomly throughout the year and accustom himself to transgress while thinking in his heart that with the approach of the Day of Judgment he will change his ways and repent. Rather, every single day a person must imagine to himself that Hashem is sitting on His Throne and judging His creations. If throughout his life he imagines to himself that he is hanging between good and bad, then it follows that he will always entertain thoughts of repentance.

The Gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Ya'akov Edelstein zt"l would point out that throughout the year those who do not make a reckoning of their ways, are deeply sunken in their ways and can no longer discern what is good and what is bad. They consider 'good' as amassing ever more wealth, yet another career, even more control, and an ever-increasing amount of pleasure and enjoyment.

Rabbi Ya'akov zt"l would cry out from the depths of his heart, "Is this what is called good?! Is this considered good even for This World? Does this kind of life give a person a good life? This is called 'imaginary good'! It passes in the blink of an eye! It seems good, but after a fleeting moment, it disappears as if it never was. The definition of 'good' is as David Hamelech exclaims, "But as for me, G-d's nearness is my good" (Tehillim 73:28). This is the only true good.

He would relate a story in which he was involved. There was a certain individual who had it 'good' in This World. He was extremely affluent and when he celebrated his sixtieth birthday he decided to settle in Ramat Hasharon. He built a beautiful villa for himself, (in those days these fancy villas were non-existent in Ramat Hasharon), a four-story house, complete with all the luxuries. He was a healthy person who enjoyed going fishing every morning for an hour or two in the

Mediterranean Sea, together with friends. He would grill the fish and delight in eating this fresh fish.

One day someone who required a sum of money for a mitzvah cause approached me. He had heard about this wealthy man and asked if I would agree to accompany him to this man, to ask if he would participate in this mitzvah. And so we went and stated our request.

In answer, the wealthy man began telling us his history: "All the money that I earned, I earned honestly (indeed he was an upright person). From the age of twelve I became independent". He left his home and parents (in Russia) and began working with his ten fingers. At first he worked as a builder and later he joined the British Army and won the tender to build for them tents, a very profitable venture. After that he took up real estate, buying and selling, and every day he would earn remarkable sums.

This is what he said: "No one helped me get ahead in life, I too am not obliged to help others! Now I no longer need to work. I am not lacking money, I have a quiet house, I planted many beautiful trees all around, I am now 'eating' what I prepared for myself! I toiled and worked hard, now I am eating the fruit, and in this fashion, I will finish my life. This being the case, as a matter of principle, I am not prepared to donate to others from my hard-earned money!"

We explained to him that it would be a mitzvah and an opportunity to thank Hashem, but he claimed that he does not believe in anything. With someone like this there is nothing to do, but the destiny that he chose for himself and the verdict that he determined, was seemingly heard Above in the Heavenly Court. For how can a person consume such an excess of possessions? And how many years will he live? And so a short time later, the rich man fell ill and began 'consuming' all the assets that he had amassed...

One day his wife told me, "Today I sold a three-story house in Tel Aviv so that I will be able to purchase the most expensive treatment that exists and buy an expensive mattress, among other medical needs. This is how he consumed all his assets in a flash, passing away just two or three years later. The destiny that he planned for himself actually came to fruition and consumed all his possessions.

"Man is born to toil." This person thought that the World to Come begins when a person retires. This is when he enjoys all the toil that he expended in his life, but he didn't

live r"l. Oy, what a terrible mistake he made! "Man is born to toil", when he is young, when he grows older, and even when he is eighty years old, he is never considered too old to toil. He was born to toil, he toils and invests in performing Hashem's will. One who is involved with commerce, must take care that all his dealings are upright. If his occupation is in any other area, he must take care not to swindle his boss and the boss too may not cheat his workers. One who works in agriculture must take care to fulfill the mitzvot dependent on the Land. The important thing is to understand that this is not the main goal in life. He should schedule fixed times for Torah study and give thanks to Hashem for his health and for the money that He gave him. A person continues to live to a ripe old age and once he takes leave of this world, he then enjoys the fruits of his labor.

The above wealthy person who owned the villa, understood well that first of all one must invest much hard work and after that one begins to enjoy the fruits of one's actions. But he switched things around and made a small mistake. He wanted to enjoy The Next World in This World, but there is no such thing. He received all his reward in This World, forgetting that This World is total preparation for the Next World.

Who is the one who is considered truly happy in this world? The Mishna (Avot 6:4) tells us, "This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation – but toil in Torah! If you do this, 'You are praiseworthy, and all is well with you.' 'You are praiseworthy' – in This World; 'and all is well with you' – in the World to Come."

