

Vayakhel Pekudei
Shabat Hachodech

March 13th 2021
29th of Adar 5781

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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 • Pninei David

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

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • 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 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

29 - Rabbi Gershon Liebman, Rosh
Yeshiva 'Dr Yosef, Navhardok

1 - Rabbi Chaim David Alkalai, a
renowned Mekubal in Yerushalayim

2 - Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber, the Fifth
Admor of Chabad

3 - Rabbi Binyomin Ze'ev Tzvi of
Zavarish, son of Rabbi Yechiel
Michel, the holy Maggid of Zlotshov

4 - Rabbi Yochanan, the Admor of
Rachmastrivka

5 - Rabbi Massoud Ben Shabbat, Rav
of Taroudant

6 - Rabbi Ya'akov Rofeh, author of
'Kol Mevaser'

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"a

MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Shabbat, the Mishkan, and the Connection Between Them

"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of the Children of Israel...On six days, work may be done, but the seventh day shall be holy for you, a day of complete rest for Hashem" (Shemot 35:1-2)

Our Sages explain the reason for preceding the section concerning Mishkan with the command about Shabbat. But there is an additional point we will try to clarify. Why were these two commands put together and said at the same time? There is obviously some deep, internal connection between Shabbat and the Mishkan.

According to our Sages, the word "Vayakhel", "He assembled", has special significance. The Yalkut Shimoni (beg. Vayakhel) writes: "'Moshe assembled': The Ba'alei Aggadah expound, right through the Torah there is no other Parsha that begins with the word 'Vayakhel'. Hashem said, 'Form large gatherings and lecture to them in public about the laws of Shabbat, so that future generations will learn from you to congregate every Shabbat in the Batei Midrashot to teach and instruct the Jewish people the Torah laws of what is forbidden and permitted on Shabbat, so that My Great Name should be praised among My children'."

With this, the Sages explain why the command about Shabbat is singular in that it was said among a gathering of the people. But this leads to another question. At this same gathering, Am Yisrael were also commanded about the Mishkan, so what is the significance of "assembling the people" concerning the second command, the Mishkan? Why was it necessary to give it over at an assembly of the people?

I would like to suggest the following answer: We know that the Mishkan served as a rectification and atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. It was also a sign and proof that Hashem forgave and pardoned Am Yisrael for this sin and He once again rested His Presence among them. On Yom Kippur, the day on which Hashem forgave them for this sin, Moshe descended from Heaven and gathered Am Yisrael together to command them about the Mishkan. The Midrash says, "Hashem said, 'Let the gold of the Mishkan come and atone for the gold with which the Golden Calf was made. Therefore, they received atonement through gold, "This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold..."

The great sin involved in the Golden Calf was the denial of Hashem and serving avodah zara. Am Yisrael rectified this sin through building the Mishkan. To remedy discarding the yoke of Heaven, they now came and exerted themselves to accept the yoke of Heaven, by building a House for Him and crowning Him as King over them.

The Midrash Tanchuma writes, "'Moshe assembled': Hashem said to Yisrael, 'If you congregate every Shabbat in the Batei Kneset and Batei Midrashot and read from the Torah and Prophets, I will consider it as if you crowned Me as King in My world.'" This explains that the purpose of commanding and warning about Shabbat specifically among an assembly, was to achieve the crowning of Hashem as King.

Although assembling the people concerned the command of Shabbat, it is also connected to the purpose of the Mishkan. The reason behind the assembling is accepting the yoke of Heaven which is an inherent part of the mitzvah of Shabbat, since the purpose of Shabbat is faith in the constant renewal of the world and Hashem's Divine Providence over us. At this gathering, Moshe stressed the concept of Shabbat as a day to crown Hashem as King (since he had already taught them the details and laws of Shabbat previously in Marah), and this was the very rectification for discarding the yoke of Heaven that was inherent in the sin of the Golden Calf.

Now we understand why Moshe said these two commands at the same gathering. Shabbat, whose purpose is revealing Hashem's Kingship, was the preparation for building the Mishkan, which came to rectify discarding the yoke by re-accepting the yoke of Heaven. If so, the special significance of assembling the people was also appropriate for the command about building the Mishkan, for the crowning Hashem as King which the gathering entails, is the very preparation required to rectify the blemish which resulted from the sin of the Golden Calf, which would be atoned for by building the Mishkan.

Inherent in Shabbat are these two concepts, rectifying the body and soul, and also rectifying one's possessions. We are commanded to rest on Shabbat and we must also make sure to shut down our money and possessions. The reason for this is that the purpose of Shabbat is to detach oneself from materialism and the world of deed, and connect and cleave to spirituality. We should feel that we are solely dependent on the King and remove any thoughts of action and work from our hearts. It is even forbidden to talk about secular matters, for we do not require anything. We have a lofty King who cares for us and provides all our needs. In this way, Shabbat brings a Jew to tangible faith that anything he has is not a result of his own doing. If during the entire week he toiled and troubled himself for his livelihood, on Shabbat the light of faith penetrates and he realizes that it is not his efforts that sustain him, rather he is dependent on Hashem. He is the One who provides for us and from Whom everything emanates.

To achieve this level of faith, we are commanded to rest from any form of exertion, discard the yoke of work and effort, and tangibly feel how we are dependent on Hashem. To achieve perfection in this feeling, Hashem commanded us to detach ourselves also from our possessions and money, that they too should rest on Shabbat and not do any work. For even though we may be resting, if our money is still working for us, we are still connected to and placing our trust in materialism and this is not complete reliance on Hashem.

The purpose of resting on Shabbat is to establish in our hearts a detachment from materialism, to dedicate ourselves to cleave to Hashem. This act will have a direct influence on the rest of the week. Even as we are involved in the days of labor, we will sanctify our deeds and perform them for Heaven's sake. This leads to our money and possessions taking on a different significance completely. Resting on Shabbat affords a different view on our assets. We realize that they are only a means to serve Hashem and not an end in themselves. In this way, we elevate and sanctify materialism.

Am Yisrael were beginning the process of rectifying the sin of the Golden Calf which blemished both their spiritualism and materialism. Their rectification was to accept upon themselves the yoke of Heaven and elevate and sanctify their possessions to the ultimate purpose of using them for Heaven's honor and causing the Divine Presence to rest among them. At this point, Moshe Rabbeinu came forward and at the same event commanded them about Shabbat which is the most fitting preparation and requisite act for the sanctification of their resources which had been sullied through the sin of the Golden Calf. Through resting on Shabbat one's resources achieve a higher and more distinguished level of serving as a conduit for the service of Hashem. Material elements are transformed into spiritual substance and impurity is converted to purity. When their means are purified from the blemish of the sin through the holiness of Shabbat, they become suitable and worthy for their true purpose, being sanctified to increase the glory of Heaven and becoming a pure vessel for the resting of the Divine Presence.



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Walking in their Ways

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

Remember That We Are Dust

I once attended the funeral of a woman who had lived over one hundred years. My acquaintance with her family was long and deep, going back tens of years.

This woman was exceedingly wealthy. She lacked for nothing. Her mansion boasted a staff of servants. Modern technology was at her beck and call. Whatever she desired was immediately granted.

But when I observed the chevrah kadisha lowering her body into the ground, I could not help but think, "Where is the splendor and aesthetics now? Where are all the pleasures and delights that were such an intrinsic part of her life? Where is her gold and silver jewelry, her diamonds, which she wore with such pride?" All of her earthly acquisitions remained behind.

This is the end of every man. As rich as he may be, when his day of death arrives, he returns to the ground from where he came. Only his soul endures, ascending to the World that is entirely Good, escorted only by the Torah and mitzvot which it performed down here. Therefore, it is worthwhile investing in Torah and good deeds while in This World, for they will be one's sole companions as he makes his way to a better world.

A similar story which drove home this point happened to a relative of my wife. He was fantastically wealthy. With his astounding assets, he could have supported many Torah institutions and needy individuals for countless years.

This man wished to arrange a meeting with my wife, his relative, to decide which charities should receive his money after he would die. Unfortunately, he died a sudden, tragic death and the meeting never took place. The last time he traveled in his magnificent car, he was involved in a terrible car accident. His car went up in flames leaving him trapped inside. He called for help but no one could save him. His wealth was useless in his hour of need. He died in this tragic way and was buried in Casablanca, without having the chance to perform the good deed of donating his funds to charity, a move which would have benefited his neshamah greatly.

The Haftarah

"Thus said the Lord, Hashem/Elokim: 'In the first [month]'" (Yechezkel 45)

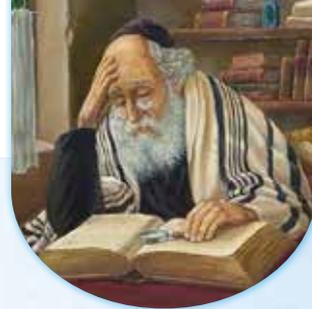
The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah talks about the offerings that the Nasi would bring on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and also discusses the festival of Pesach. Similarly, the Maftir of Shabbat HaChodesh talks about Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the approaching festival of Pesach.

Guard Your Tongue

A Joke Can Be a Source of Pain

It is forbidden to relate something even just as a joke or lighthearted conversation, if it is a derogatory statement or could cause harm.

Relating something humorous that might embarrass the one involved, if it is told over in his presence, is considered as lashon hara. Many comments said in jest are in fact a source of pain for those involved.



In Our Father's Path

The Iron Dome that Protected in the Merit of Observing Shabbat

The commandment to observe the Shabbat is repeated in this week's Parsha. Inherent in Shabbat is its great power to defend and protect those who observe and delight in the Shabbat. We present a wonderful story (published by the 'Kol Beramah' Magazine, Shevat 5781) which demonstrates how Shabbat observance protected a large city in the South of the Holy Land, from what should have been a direct hit by rockets fired from Gaza.

Several weeks ago, a ceremony took place bestowing commendations to several soldiers who on their own initiative, saved, with Hashem's help, an entire town from the devastation of rockets that had been launched from Gaza. Certain soldiers were responsible for the Iron Dome battery someplace in the south when suddenly their radar picked up several rockets that had been launched from Gaza in the direction of one of the large cities in the south.

According to particulars from the radar, these rockets would land right in the center of town, resulting in a terrible tragedy, G-d forbid. The soldiers had nano-seconds at their disposable to activate the Iron Dome which would neutralize the fatal rockets. The problem was, according to orders, the soldiers had to receive authorization to activate from a senior officer who was not on grounds.

They were unsuccessful in trying to reach him. Within a fraction of a second they realized that they if they do not activate the Iron Dome system on their own initiative, the rockets from Gaza will land in the city center in no time.

So the soldiers decided, counter to military protocol, to activate the neutralizing rocket and with G-d's help, they suc-

ceeded in demolishing the rockets that were flying overhead. In this way, with enormous Heavenly kindness, a great tragedy was averted.

At this ceremony, they were awarded commendations. The senior army officials explained that they were receiving these awards in recognition of the initiative they showed, despite violating protocol.

But, a source who was aware of the goings-on, added a 'small detail'. He was not taking away from the soldiers' initiative and even praised their heroic actions. But according to him, the real 'medal' should go to... our Holy Shabbat! In fact, the entire miracle of the deliverance of the southern town occurred thanks to observing the Shabbat.

He related that the situation involved another incident of 'breaking the rules'. On Friday, the commander of this Iron Dome received an order from his superiors to dismantle the Iron Dome and move it to a different place. They were sure that this area in the south was already sufficiently secure and there was therefore no need to continue operating the battery.

The commander realized that they would not complete the dismantling before the onset of Shabbat and since it was not a matter of life and death, he made the decision to delay the dismantling until after Shabbat. And since it would anyway remain where it was for the moment, the commander decided to leave it ready for operation and the soldiers continued manning the system.

That Friday night the radar picked up the rockets that suddenly left Gaza. The soldiers and their commander tried to get hold of the senior military officer to receive authorization to activate the Iron Dome but could not find him. As we said, they decided to activate the battery on their own accord. Of course, had it been dismantled, this would not have come into question and the deadly rockets would have landed in the center of this large southern city.

In the merit of observing Shabbat, thousands of residents were saved from what could have ended in great tragedy.



Pearls of the Parsha

Treasures

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



Man is a Mishkan for His Soul

"These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's bidding" (Shemot 38:21)

In Parshat Pikudei, Moshe Rabbeinu lists a detailed reckoning of all income and expenses involved in the construction of the Mishkan and the Parsha then goes on to speak about the service of the Mishkan and its vessels. When Bnei Yisrael completed all the work, it says (ibid 39:32), "All the work of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, was completed, and the Children of Israel had done everything that Hashem commanded Moshe, so did they do".

I would like to suggest the following idea: The double expression in the verse, "the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle" (Shemot 38:21) is an allusion for Bnei Yisrael to understand what they must try and resemble. That is why it says "These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle", for the Tabernacle hints to the body of each and every Jew which acts as a dwelling place (Mishkan) for the soul.

Similarly, it also hints to Bnei Yisrael who must learn from Moshe Rabbeinu's conduct concerning the Mishkan and apply it to their own lives. For indeed, Bnei Yisrael saw Moshe Rabbeinu reckoning all the expenses and this surprised them. They had already accumulated enough materials to construct the Mishkan and Moshe Rabbeinu had even told them to stop bringing donations because there was a surplus. So why did he have to continue calculating the expenses involved in the Mishkan?

Furthermore, Bnei Yisrael certainly did not suspect Moshe Rabbeinu, G-d forbid, of wanting to take part of the silver and gold for himself because if he wanted to do so, he would not have told them to stop bringing donations but on the contrary, would have said there is still not enough and in that way he could put the surplus in his own pocket. However, although Moshe Rabbeinu was certainly innocent, he made a constant reckoning of all the expenses and even announced the exact amounts of each material involved in building the Mishkan, as Chazal tell us. So why in fact did he do this?

Moshe Rabbeinu did so with a lofty goal in mind. He wished to give over a message to Bnei Yisrael to conduct themselves as he did. For indeed, when Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, the Shechina departed from among Yisrael and once they repented, the condition for returning the Shechina was to build the Mishkan where the Shechina would rest.

With this Moshe wanted to teach Bnei Yisrael that every Jewish person is like a Mishkan for the Shechina because that is where his soul, which is of G-dly essence, rests. This is the concept of "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them" (Shemot 25:8), referring to among each and every one of the Jewish people.

A Reckoning of the Length of Prayer

"And Moshe blessed them" (Shemot 39:43)

What blessing did he give them?

Rashi explains that he said to them: "May it be His will that the Shechina rest among your handiwork. May the pleasantness of my Lord, our G-d, be upon us- may He establish our handiwork for us; our handiwork may He establish". This verse is taken from "A prayer by Moshe", one of the eleven Psalms that were written by Moshe Rabbeinu.

The holy Zohar (Noach 1:62) writes that every day for the duration of the time that Am Yisrael prays the three prayers, the fiery furnace of Gehinom rests. It is explained that every prayer lasts for one and a half hours so it follows that Gehinom rests every day for four and a half hours.

The 'Megaleh Amukot' (Ve'etchanan 127) records the following exact reckoning. During one week, Gehinom rests for a total of 51 hours because during the six days of the week it rests altogether 27 hours (4.5 times 6) and on Shabbat a further 24 hours, for Gehinom rests the entire Shabbat. So, it follows that during the length of one-week Gehinom burns for only 117 hours (7 days times 24 hours = 168 hours, minus 27+24 = 117).

An interesting addition is brought by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Rabinowitz shlita (Kerem Chemed, psalm 91). He writes that Shir Hashirim contains 117 verses and this is why anyone who recites it is saved from the judgement of Gehinom.

Psalms 91, "Whoever sits in the refuge of the Most High" has 112 words and by repeating the last verse "With long life..." that has five words, it amounts to 117 words. It follows then that this Psalm alludes to the hours that Gehinom burns.

The Women Brought Out of Love of the Mitzvah

"The men came with the women; everyone whose heart motivated him brought bracelets, nose-rings, rings, body ornaments" (Shemot 35:22)

The precise wording of the verse 'על הנשים', translated as "with the women" but normally written as 'עם הנשים', is explained by our esteemed master, HaGaon HaTzadik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, in his exemplary fashion. The Mishkan was a rectification for the sin of the Golden Calf. The men were the ones who sinned and caused a blemish and they had to rectify their sin. But the women had no part in this sin at all (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 45) Therefore the men had a stronger desire and aspiration than the women to assist with the building of the Mishkan, to atone for their sin, and that is why they hurried to bring their donations more than the women. That is why it says 'האנשים על הנשים', to tell us that the men came along with more haste since they were the ones who sinned so they now hurried to elevate themselves. But the women brought only because of the love of the mitzvah.

This can also be understood from the difference in the spelling of 'נשים', women, and 'אנשים', men. The only difference is the addition of the letter 'alef' which is present in the word 'אנשים', men. The 'alef' hints to the 'Alufo Shel Olam', the Almighty. This alludes to the fact that with the act of the Golden Calf the men sinned against Hashem, the Almighty.

The Mouth Reflects the Heart

"And the Breastplate would not be loosened from above the Ephod" (Shemot 39:21)

HaRav HaKadosh of Sadiklov zt"l in his sefer 'Degel Machane Ephraim' wonders that the command "And the Breastplate would not be loosened" is enumerated by the commentaries as one of the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot. If so, since the Torah is eternal for all the Jewish people at all times, how can we fulfil this mitzvah nowadays?

He answers that the main mitzvah of the Breastplate was that it should always remain on the Ephod. The word 'אפוד', Ephod, has the same numerical value (85) as 'פה', mouth. The meaning of "And the Breastplate would not be loosened", is that the heart should not be loosened from the Ephod, the mouth. One's mouth and heart should always be 'equal' and the heart should be in agreement with that which is expressed by the mouth.

All Our Deeds Should be for the Sake of Heaven

"All the women whose hearts inspired them with wisdom" (Shemot 35:26)

Rabbi Abba said (Zohar HaKadosh Tazria 50a), "As the women were working they would say, 'This is for the Mikdash, this is for the Mishkan, this is for the Parochet'. And this is also what all the craftsmen did, so that holiness should rest on their hands and the work should be sanctified. In this way, when the work was completed and set in place, it was full of holiness".

Similarly, anyone who builds an edifice must at the outset say aloud that he is building for the sake of the service of Hashem, as it says "Woe to him who builds his house without righteousness". In this way he will be blessed with Heavenly Assistance and Hashem will bless it with holiness and peace. This is the meaning of the verse "You will know that your tent is at peace" (Iyov 5:24).

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



We assume that the women came and handed over their jewelry for the building of the Mishkan out of their desire to take part in building the Mishkan. However, the Seforno stresses that they despised their jewelry because of their love of Hashem Yitbarach.

This is what the Seforno writes: "Those women despised the matter of their jewelry and dedicated their mirrors to show that they no longer required them".

This serves as a lesson to us that one who is connected to spirituality no longer requires matters of This World. This is a level that every Jew can attain, according to his particular level. A person's life is full of challenges and in fact, every step that a person takes in This World is a challenge from Hashem to see how he treads and in which fashion he directs his footsteps.

The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita, in his sefer 'Borchi Nafshi', relates the story of a European Jew who wished to buy a piece of fur for his coat. He was prepared to pay the costly price that such a product was worth. How great was his surprise when the gentile merchant offered him the fur at a greatly reduced price, only twenty percent of the fixed market price!

If, for example, the regular price of fur was one thousand shekels, the merchant was prepared to sell it to this Jew for a mere two hundred shekels.

At first, he could not believe his ears and asked the merchant a second and third time at what price he intends to sell him the fur. When the merchant confirmed time and again his original cheap offer, the Jew decided to purchase a number of furs from him and sell them at the regular price. In this way, he will make a fortune from this opportune deal.

He went ahead with his plan and amassed a large profit.

On seeing his good fortune, he decided to try his luck again. This time too, the merchant was prepared to sell him the furs at the discounted price.

The Jew bought a large stock of fur and sold them, once again growing very wealthy from the business deal.

The third time around, the merchant suddenly changed his tune. He raised his voice and asked, "Tell me, how much money did you pay for the furs I sold you?"

When he quoted the discounted price, the merchant began shouting and even threatened him. While waving his finger, he started threatening him harshly, called him a thief and claiming that he had pressurized him until he agreed to this unrealistic price... He then demanded that he return all the furs...

The Jew was stunned and could not understand what happened suddenly. Why had the ship suddenly begun to rock?

"You were the one who offered me this price for the furs, so what do you want from me now?" he asked in bewilderment.

But before he could turn around, the police arrived, handcuffed and arrested him.

It turned out that this merchant had close connections with the authorities and due to his honorable position, they carried out his instructions and the Jew was imprisoned. He declared that he had never stolen a penny from anyone and this time too he was not guilty, but all his arguments and justifications were to no avail. The investigators believed the merchant and the Jew was put behind bars.

Several days later, the merchant entered his cell and said to him: "I want to offer you a certain deal. If you fulfil my condition, you will immediately be released from prison".

The Jew who had no idea what the merchant intended to suggest, listened to what he had to say. This was his proposal:

"I have here with me a statue of our god. If you agree to kiss it, I will tell the prison wardens to release you immediately."

The Jew heard the suggestion and was shocked. He immediately pulled himself together and replied with faith and courage that he has no intention whatsoever to fulfil his wish. "I am a Jew and it is forbidden for me to do what you are asking. I am even expected to give up my life rather than commit this sin and I am ready and prepared to give myself up to be killed. Nothing will stand in my way!"

The merchant tried to persuade him several times but when he saw that the Jew remained a faithful son to his G-d and was not prepared to exchange his G-d for a different god, he suddenly changed his tone and treated the imprisoned Jew with tenderness and amiability.

"Do you not recognize me?" He asked. "Look at me and tell me if you don't remem-

ber that I worked for you thirty years ago! Either way, I wish to inform you that you are released. Come, I will explain the chain of events starting from the moment you came to the market to buy the fur."

"I was left with very pleasant memories from the period that I worked for you. Your uprightness and good middot, your forbearance for all different people and your efforts to create a pleasant atmosphere, remained constantly in my mind, even in later years when we parted ways.

As soon as I saw you enter my fur store, I decided to sell you the merchandise at a reduced price, to repay you in some small way for all that you did for me during the time I worked for you.

Indeed, I willingly sold you the fur at that ridiculous price, a sum that did not even cover what I paid for it. But it was worth it for me, I wanted to cause you pleasure.

When you returned the second time, I did not change my treatment towards you. But following that, I recalled that when I worked for you, you would talk at length in praise of the Jewish religion and faith in the Creator of the World, while completely disregarding talk about any other deities.

As soon I remembered this, I decided that it was only worth it for me to allow you to become so wealthy by selling you the furs at this price, if I make you face a test and demand that you kiss my idol. Then I will see if all your talk really beats sincerely in your heart and you believe in your G-d all the way, or maybe it was all just lip service.

Now, when I witnessed your strong faith and came face to face with your faithfulness to the Creator, I leave in your hands all the furs that you bought from me, together with the great profits, and will even sell you more fur, at a further reduced price, so that you will successfully earn more money and become significantly wealthy.

What do we learn from this story that was told over, as we mentioned above, by one of the Roshei Yeshivot?

Success and prosperity were waiting for that Jew behind the door. Had he not withstood the challenge, G-d forbid, and kissed the idol, or uttered one word against his faith, he would never have merited attaining all that he did.

Only after withstanding the great test and proving to Hashem that he believes that all that He sets in his path is for the good and no one can succeed in taking away this faith, were the gates of success and Heavenly Assistance opened for him.