

Soukot

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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

19 - Rabbi Amram Elmaliach

20 - Rabbi Eliezer Papo, author of Pele Yo'etz

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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

Performing Mitzvot with Mesirat Nefesh

The Sages (Avoda Zara 3b) relate that in the future the nations of the world will come and convert to Judaism. How will they come? Wearing tefillin on their heads and arms, tzitzit on their clothing and with mezuzot affixed to their doorposts. This is how they will approach Hashem and demand reward for their good deeds.

Chazal tell us further that besides demanding reward they will ask to receive the Torah. But Hashem will respond, "Before I presented the Torah to the Jewish Nation, I offered it to you and you declined, and now suddenly you want the Torah!?"

Then the non-Jews will answer that now they do want the Torah and Hashem will respond, "Fools! One who prepares on Erev Shabbat will have food to eat on Shabbat; how will one who does not prepare on Erev Shabbat have what to eat on Shabbat? Even so, I will offer you the easy mitzvah of Sukkah." They will immediately go up to their roofs and build themselves a Sukkah. But then Hashem will bring out the burning sun as in the height of summer and they will leave their Sukkot and even kick at them.

From the fact that the non-Jews undertake to perform mitzvot such as tallit, tefillin and mezuzah, it is clearly inferable that they seriously wish to become Jews and receive spiritual reward.

But Hashem will respond that they are behaving foolishly, for only one who prepares in advance can benefit from the fruits of their labors. This preparation must be a lifelong investment and therefore only the Jews who actively invested in their future throughout the long exile can merit a profitable afterlife.

It is the Jews who performed all the mitzvot; they ate matzah on Pesach, ate in huts on Sukkot, fasted on Yom Kippur and adhered to the numerous mitzvot. Since the Jewish nation carried out the mitzvot with such dedication and loyalty under all circumstances, it is they alone who deserve reward.

The non-Jews however unrelentingly beg to correct this seeming injustice, and maintain their claim that if Hashem would have commanded them, they too would have undertaken to keep the Mitzvot.

They do not let up and continue, "Had You given us mitzvot in advance, we too would have observed them. But You did not give us the Torah."

Hashem will reply that before He gave the Torah to the Jews, He went around to all the nations and offered them the Torah but they all turned it down.

"If you did not want it then, why are you now coming to ask for reward?"

The non-Jews however, have the same attitude as the wicked Bilam who said (Bamidbar 23:10), "Would it be that I die like the best of them, and my afterlife be like theirs." In other words, Bilam wanted to die like a Jew and receive a place in the World to Come, but he would not relinquish living the life of a gentile. The Gemara (Sota 22b) refers to such people by saying, "He behaves like Zimri and wants the reward of Pinchas."

Hashem will treat the non-Jews exceptionally gracefully and tell them, "Let us see if you are deserving of reward. I will give you the easy and inexpensive mitzvah of Sukkah which does not require much effort and we will see if you can carry it out." Each one will immediately go and build a Sukkah on their roof. What will Hashem do? He will bring on a heatwave as experienced during the height of summer, and the non-Jews will be so uncomfortable, they will leave the Sukkah and kick at it.

This behavior is hard to understand. They know their only chance at receiving reward is if they successfully perform this mitzvah of Sukkah. So why do they leave and kick it as soon as it gets a bit difficult? They are losing all chance of reward!

Do the Jewish people behave in this way? We often experience hot weather on Sukkot and nevertheless happily sit in the Sukkah. And if sitting in the Sukkah causes us distress and we become exempt, we leave with sad feelings; G-d-forbid we certainly would never kick it!

This is one of the important differences between Jews and the rest of the nations. Jews are accustomed to suffering and because of our love for Hashem, this love on performing mitzvot does not suddenly cease when we face hardship. We therefore continue serving Hashem as before. Every Jew is prepared to undergo suffering as long as he can perform the mitzvot perfectly.

This is the meaning of loving Hashem with self-sacrifice. It is something particular to the Jews alone and can never be found among the nations. One who loves Hashem with supreme devotion will fulfill all the mitzvot in all circumstances. All those who instead of going to sleep or sitting down to eat, go and study Torah or listen to a Torah lecture, are also showing self-sacrifice and they are the ones who receive their just reward.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Rich History

One Sukkot holiday, as I made my way toward the yeshiva in France with my four species in hand, I met my gentile neighbor. He stopped me to ask, "I met many people like you today walking with various plants in their hands. What are these plants? What do they symbolize?"

"They are the four species," I answered.

But he was not satisfied. "What does that mean?" he continued. I briefly explained about the lulav, etrog, hadas, and aravah, which we are commanded to take on this festival.

The man took advantage of our religious discussion and continued, "Every year, I hear you singing in your little huts. Do you build a hut every year? What is the purpose of it?"

I began explaining the subject of the sukkah, relating how the Jews left Egypt many years ago. "Egypt?" he asked, puzzled. "When was this?" He knew my family did not hail from Egypt.

"A couple of thousand years ago," I replied.

He laughed and asked what had happened then. I related that our nation traveled in the Wilderness for forty years. "Why in the Wilderness?" he wondered, "It's so hot by day and cold by night." I then explained that Hashem enveloped us in Clouds of Glory, which protected us from the cold, the heat, wild animals, and all the dangers of the road. That is why we celebrate Sukkot, in memory of these wonderful clouds.

"And you mean to tell me that you believe all this?" he asked, incredulous.

"Certainly!" I exclaimed. "I celebrate this holiday specifically because I believe that Hashem redeemed us from Egypt, took us through the Wilderness, gave us the Torah, and brought us into our Land."

He took his leave and left me with the thought that a gentile can never understand our faith in Hashem, as well as all the wonderful holidays commemorating the many miracles which were done for our ancestors throughout our history. Gentiles do not have a history of faith.

Am Yisrael is the only nation which has weathered the batterings of history. Throughout the generations, they felt they are the descendants of our Avot and continue their legacy. Our virtue as the eternal nation lies in the fact that we transmit our rich heritage to the future generations. In this manner, our children too are proud of their unique status as the Chosen Nation. They will surely pass on the legacy to their children yet to come. A nation that has a past also has a future.

The Haftarah

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

The connection to the Chag: The Haftarah mentions the war of Gog and Magog that will erupt at the end of days and we have a tradition that this will take place on Sukkot.

Guard Your Tongue

Regret, Confessing, and Future Commitment

The order of repentance for sins committed against Hashem is as follows: Regret for committing the sin, a verbal confession, and a commitment not to repeat the sin evermore.

One who listened to and believed lashon hara is obligated with an additional level of teshuva: He must precede the abovementioned steps with a commitment not to believe the gossip and he must seriously convince himself of their fallacy. Even when circumstances permit lashon hara to be spoken for a beneficial purpose, the listener must not accept the information as fact, he may only be cautious.



In Our Father's Path

Why Did Rabbi Chaim Ozer Change His Mind?

The sefer Moadim Uzmanim relates an interesting episode that occurred with the saintly Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski zt"l, Chief Rabbi of Vilna. A guest once came to visit Rabbi Chaim Ozer on Sukkot and was invited to partake of a meal in the Sukkah. Rabbi Chaim Ozer excused himself and told the guest he himself won't join him since he wasn't feeling well enough and the halacha tells us that someone who is uncomfortable in the Sukkah is exempt from the mitzvah.

After a short while Rabbi Chaim Ozer entered the Sukkah with his plate in order to join the guest, who was clearly surprised. Rav Chaim Ozer explained that the exemption given to one who feels ill is an exemption for the mitzvah of Sukkah only. In this situation however, there was another element involved in the decision; the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim, hosting guests. Being under the weather isn't included in the exemption for that mitzvah. In Rav Chaim Ozer's unique words, "I am released from the mitzvah of Sukkah, but not from the mitzvah of hosting guests."

The main theme of the story is obviously that Rav Chaim Ozer originally thought he was exempt from the mitzvah of Sukkah but after some thought changed his mind. There are however a couple of difficulties in understanding this story that require further clarification. Firstly, what went through the mind of Rav Chaim Ozer during those few minutes in-between his two decisions? Secondly, how come it only took him a few minutes to issue a new ruling? Furthermore, how come the Rav didn't realize from the start that the mitzvah of welcoming guests should play a role in his issuance of a ruling? And finally, we can assume that when the Rav pronounced his decision the first time he had gone through the Torah in its entirety, so how did he miss this important detail of caring for one's brother?

There is one answer to all of these questions, and it gives us the lesson to derive from this story. A decision like this cannot be based in totality on halachic guidelines; rather it must incorporate the ethical aspect too. When one learns mussar (Torah based ethics) one must actualize the lessons

and messages in his mind, but to do this properly, one must learn mussar daily. That way he will constantly refresh himself and rethink everything he does in order to pay attention as to whether it complies with all aspects of the Torah. Even a personality as great as Rav Chaim Ozer must pay attention to this and that was the basis for his change of mind. He originally based his decision on halacha, but later realized that the ethical consideration was likewise paramount.



Quill of The Heart

The following is a sacred piyut, penned from the pure heart of the holy Maran Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto Hagadol, zy"א, on the lengthy exile among the nations

סימן: חיים

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
 אך 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
 בימיך 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



The Secret of the Holy Ushpizin

The festival of Sukkot is a holy one on which we merit the presence of the seven holy Ushpizin, Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aaron, Yosef and David. It's not for naught that Yosef is among the list, for he personified the trait of transcending one's natural inclination and behaved in an exemplary manner towards his brothers despite the way they treated him. Through this he merited being considered 'adam', someone who has reached true perfection.

Yosef's brothers treated him terribly by selling him into slavery but he did not take revenge. On the contrary, he told them (Bereishit 50:20), "You intended to treat me badly, but G-d rearranged it for the good." Additionally, Yosef himself paid them back good for bad and therefore merited having one of the days of Sukkot dedicated to him.

Yosef learned this behavior from Hashem Yitbarach Himself who also does not punish man immediately when he commits a sin, rather He waits for him to repent. As the verse says (Yechezkel 18:23), "Do I wish for the death of the wicked, says Hashem, rather his repentance (I seek) and he will live." Yosef too, with his outstanding personality, followed in this way and treated his brothers kindly, because he felt G-dliness within himself. That is how he came to the conclusion that if Hashem didn't penalize them, it means Hashem in His infinite wisdom decided it wasn't necessary, so why interfere with G-d's masterplan?

Any person who feels this G-dly force within him will not want to take revenge or punish others, even though they caused him to suffer. On the contrary, he acts kindly towards them and this makes him deserving of the title 'adam', since he achieved a lofty level.

With this we can better understand the idea of the Ushpizin who visit the sukkot on this festival. The numerical value of the acronym of the names of the first six Ushpizin is seventy-two. This is equal to the numerical value of one of Hashem's holy names (Zohar Hakadosh vol. 2, 132b). This is hinted to in the verse (Shemot 19:9), "And Hashem told Moshe, behold I am going to reveal Myself to you in the fog-like cloud." The numerical value of the Hebrew word for cloud (בט) also equals seventy-two.

Why are the names of the holy Ushpizin hinted to in this specific word, "fog-like cloud"? On a deep level, clouds represent the depths of physicality. The reason why Hashem calls His holy nation 'Adam' is because they override this cloud-physicality. They abolish the darkness and physicality therein and are therefore referred to as 'cloud', the name of Hashem. This is something awesome, for Hashem says about Himself, "Behold I am going to reveal Myself to you in the fog-like cloud." I am going to reveal Myself to you in the form of the holy Ushpizin.



TIMELY MESSAGE

Quality Actions and Quality Four Species

We find that one of the foremost elements of the festival of Sukkot is the idea of beautification and enhancement, both with the effort we invest to adorn the sukkah and of course with searching for a high quality set of Arba Minim (Four Species).

The sefer Ayin Parpara'ot, quoting HaRav Ya'akovson zt"l, brings a wonderful reason why this is so. He explains the idea with a parable. Imagine a mother who wants to dress her young child for a wedding. After spending time outside, the child returns home dirty and muddy. The mother begins dressing him with his fancy clothing, not bothering to first scrub him clean. A neighbor notices and remarks, "You are omitting something important. First shower him and then when he is clean dress him with his wedding clothes." The lesson is clear. One must first go through a process of purification before being able to marvel at the beauty. During the month of Elul we undergo a deep-cleansing, and on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Hashem purifies us from the stains of our sins. Following this the beautiful species and decorated sukkah will amalgamate perfectly with our shining souls.

How to Check an Etrog

Rabbi Chizkiyahu Mishkowsky shlit"a, Mashgiach of Yeshivat Orchos Torah, told over the following precious story with its important message. He heard it from Rav Greineman shlit"a, Rosh Yeshiva of Kfar Ganim, who heard it from the Rav

who was present when the episode transpired.

The Rav related that a group of people in Bnei Brak decided to arrange a sale of the Four Species at reduced prices in order to help aveichim with their already high Yom Tov expenses. The produce was not the most beautiful but still of a high quality. The Rabbis on hand decided they would only answer specific questions so as to save time. If there was a blemish or irregularity, buyers could approach the Rabbis but not with a general question about the quality of a specific lulav or etrog. In this way they would be able to serve the large amount of people.

Along came a simple looking Jew with a heavy Russian accent and asked, "Honorable Rabbi, I apologize, I know we are only supposed to ask specific questions. But as you can no doubt notice from my accent, I was raised in Russia with no knowledge of Torah and mitzvot. I didn't even know there was a G-d. People were afraid to open their mouths. All I knew was that I belonged to the Jewish people. Eventually I was able to leave and three years ago came to Eretz Yisrael. I am slowly catching up on all that I missed in my education. However, with regards to the Four Species, I don't even know which questions to ask. I chose a few sets that seem to look nice and I would like the Rav to tell me if I chose well."

The Rav agreed to check the three sets he had chosen for himself and his two sons. How could he turn away this sincere Jew? The Rav picked up the first etrog and was stunned. It was a beauty, perfectly clean with no blemishes or scratches! Maybe this was a fluke, the Rav thought, it could happen that a beautiful etrog of this quality ends up in the shipment and someone has to get it. However, the Rav was doubly shocked when

the next etrog too was absolutely pristine, perfectly shaped and immaculately clean. And the third one likewise was a beauty. The Rav was astonished! He thought maybe he couldn't see clearly after exerting his eyes to look at so many etrogim, so he conferred with the other Rabbis who were present. They too were duly impressed and said:

"These etrogim are the highest quality one can find. If only we too could merit performing the mitzvah with such beautiful etrogim!"

The Rav realized there must be something behind this. Someone without any knowledge cannot choose such exceptional sets by chance; it seemed miraculous.

The Russian fellow noticed the Rav's astonishment and explained, "I constantly live with G-d. I spoke to Him before I came here and said, "G-d, You know that I love You; You know what I went through in Russia – we weren't allowed to know of Your existence and the authorities didn't allow us to learn about You. If they would have permitted it, You know I would have clung to You. I arrived here in Eretz Yisrael and constantly try to advance my knowledge in all areas of Torah and mitzvot. Please, I implore, I don't know how to choose the required species for Sukkot. You choose them for me!"

Rav Mishkowsky remarked that this story teaches us that if a person does whatever he can and prays to Hashem for assistance, He will do His part and pour forth an abundance of success. This is called having a constant connection with the Creator – to know and recognize that He wants and is able to help us, and that He loves every Jew. This is of course dependent on following the ways He has set out for us, and praying with a pure heart for Him to fulfill our earnest desires.