

# PACHAD DAVID

Behar



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto** shlita  
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**"For the Children of Israel are servants to Me, they are My servants, whom I have taken out of the land of Egypt - I am Hashem, your G-d" (Vayikra 25:55).**

The reality of the Jewish people being Hashem's slaves is mentioned often in the Torah. After Bnei Yisrael were enslaved by the Egyptian's, Hashem redeemed them with a high hand and outstretched arm and then gave them the Torah so they could be subservient to Hashem alone.

On the one hand the Torah may seem to be a burden and form of bondage, since a person is required to sacrifice his desires and lusts for the will of Hashem. Following the Torah path can sometimes cause monetary loss or embarrassment, but despite this we are commanded to obey the Torah commands and live according to its dictates. However, we find something interesting: although the Torah is a form of servitude, we are told (Avot 6:2), "You can have no freer man than one who engages in the study of Torah." In light of this, a question arises. Is Torah in fact a burden, or truly a form of freedom to the extent that one who toils in it is considered a free man?

The answer seems to be that indeed accepting the yoke of Torah and mitzvot has the character of bondage and slavery, and this was indeed Hashem's purpose in giving us the Torah: to remove from us the yoke of Egyptian bondage and place us under the yoke of Heaven. But nonetheless, one who observes Torah and mitzvot sees the fulfillment of "Only a servant of Hashem is free." To understand this idea in a more comprehensive fashion, we will explain with an example:

As Pesach approaches, we are required to remove the *chametz* from every corner of our home. Who better than us can testify that the task of cleaning for Pesach is a form of "slavery" and entails much hard work? But when Pesach arrives, the feeling of enslavement disappears and is forgotten about as if it never was; we suddenly feel like free men, unhampered by toil and concerns.

Similarly, in most Jewish homes, Erev Shabbat is a busy and stressful time, with every member of the household preoccupied with preparations for the soon-approaching Shabbat. A stranger who turns up in our home on Friday will surely notice a lot of activity, and sometimes may

## maskil Le'David True Freedom with No Parallel



even feel the pressure hovering in the air. But as the women light the Shabbat candles while the men rush off to the *beit kneset*, great peace immediately descends on the home and a certain pleasure and tranquility envelops one and all, as Chazal say, "When Shabbat arrives, tranquility arrives." Concerning this Chazal say, "One who toils on Erev Shabbat will eat on Shabbat."

Meaning, one who invests effort and works hard on Erev Shabbat is given the merit of feeling the peace and tranquility that are part and parcel of Shabbat, and will delight in the Shabbat delicacies he toiled to prepare.

From these pressurizing and stressful times such as Erev Pesach and Erev Shabbat, we should derive a lesson for the times we are obligated to observe commandments that demand much toil from us. There is no doubt that sometimes mitzvah observance requires a person to muster great strength, and it is sometimes necessary to fight a fierce battle against the Yetzer Hara who tries with all his might to enslave us under his authority and make us reject the yoke of Torah and mitzvot.

Another example; when a person manages to overcome his Yetzer Hara and get up early in the morning to pray with a minyan, the sense of burden and slavery he felt when he had to force himself to get out of bed is soon replaced by a feeling of joy and peace, since he succeeded in overcoming his inclination and compelling his Yetzer Hara to yield.

When Chazal say, "You can have no freer man than one who engages in the study of Torah," they are indicating that this person is free from the Yetzer Hara and his corrupt grip. And when the Yetzer Hara no longer lurks at the entrance and man is not enslaved to him, then observing the mitzvot, despite all the toil involved, leaves him with a feeling of satisfaction and joy which has no parallel. This is true freedom!

Indeed the Jewish people are enslaved to Hashem and His Torah, and if they seek to become subservient to any other entity, they are punished for this. However, enslavement to Hashem does not mean a life of suffering and sorrow as is true for other forms of slavery. Rather, it expresses the connection and commitment of the Jewish people to their Creator. On the contrary, when a person is careful to preserve and even intensify this "bondage", he very quickly feels like a truly free man.

13 Iyar 5782  
14 May 2022

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## Hilula

- 13 Iyar – Rabbi Yeshaya Halevi, author of *Be'er Heitiv*
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- 19 Iyar – Rabbi Ezra Attiah, Rosh Yeshiva Porat Yosef
- 20 Iyar – Rabbi Yosef Waltoch
- 20 Iyar – Rabbi Meir Brandsdorfer, author of *Kneh B'shem*





## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### A Farmer's Blessing

This heartwarming story, quoted from the sefer *Mitzvot B'simcha*, concerns the Legtibi family. It focuses not only on their excitement upon the return of their son – the most severely wounded casualty of the Intifada – but includes an added dimension.

While the Keren HaShevi'it Foundation defines what happened as “*peiros shevi'it*” (Shemittah fruit), namely that the overt miracle experienced by this distinguished family, one of the founders of the moshav, took place thanks to their Shemittah observance, the veteran farmer himself prefers to be more modest: “I do not deserve such great miracles,” he says. “My son's recovery was a result of the many prayers offered throughout the world.”

It all began with the father's decision to observe the laws of Shemittah. Moshe decided to declare his fruits completely ownerless, and not even transfer them to *otzar beit din* (*beit din* picks and distributes the produce subject to certain regulations). This brought masses of Jews to his plantations during the summer, and they left with baskets laden with plums, pears, nectarines, and peaches. If that was not enough, busloads of *cheder* children also came to the orchards, to see up close how Shemittah is observed.

At the beginning of the eighth year, when he wanted to start working the land, he and his family experienced a terrible tragedy. Their son, Yigal, was critically wounded by a sniper's bullet in Chevron, while guarding the worshippers in Me'arat Hamachpelah, during the week of Parshat Chayai Sara.

Right away the doctors expressed their opinion: there was no chance of recovery. In the face of the doctors' despair, the farmer asked the heads of Keren HaShevi'it to approach the Gedolei Hador, particularly Maran Harav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l, and ask them to pray for his son.

The answer-blessing was not long in coming: “Worthy is Shemittah to protect Yigal!” Indeed, to the astonishment of all the doctors, a great miracle occurred and Moshe's son was released from the hospital, alive and well! While all their friends and neighbors began dancing in the streets, the father and son both pointed to the plum groves on the outskirts of the *moshav*.

“It is all thanks to Abba's orchards and vineyards, there, on the western slopes near the *moshav*, which he completely abandoned during Shemittah,” said the son, adding with great emotion: “This year Abba did not abandon the mitzvah, and in this merit Hashem did not abandon me!”

Furthermore:

Maran Harav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l coined the concept, “A blessing received from Shemittah observers,” explaining that those [Shemittah observers] blessed with the Heavenly blessing of “I will ordain My blessing for you,” can and are authorized to pass on this blessing to others as well.

In Sivan 5775, right in the middle of the Shemittah year, the fourth graders of the *Mishkenot Tamar* school in Brachfeld, Modiin Illit, were taken on a trip to visit a farmer who observed Shemittah – Doron Twig from Moshav Azaria. This farmer is extremely devoted to the mitzvah of Shemittah, in an outstanding way.

The teachers approached the farmer's wife and asked her to bless two teachers of the staff, each of whom had only one child (one child was already fifteen, and the other five years old). They described the anguish of these teachers at not seeing their families grow.

The woman promised to pray and kept her word. Nine months later, on Erev Shabbat Parshat Vayakhel-Shekalim, both these teachers merited celebrating the *brit milah* of their baby boys!

It is unbelievable how both teachers gave birth on the same day, after the farmer's wife blessed them! “How great are Your deeds, Hashem!” “I will ordain My blessing for you,” literally.

This was another blessing of a farmer that was fulfilled, and as Maran Harav Kanievsky zt”l said, it is worthwhile receiving a blessing from these people who show extreme devotion to Shemittah observance, when so much is at stake.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

### A Network of Charity

I remember the first time I donated a sizeable sum to *tzedakah*. I was already living in France when a poor man begged me to help marry off his daughter.

Up until that day, I was used to offering small donations to those who asked and had intended to do the same in this case too. Suddenly, I was struck by a thought. What if I were in his unfortunate place and would have to depend on others to marry off my daughter? At that moment I overcame my natural instincts and handed the man a considerable sum of money.

I can attest that since that day, when I discovered the possibility of giving charity openhandedly, I merited repeating this form of large donations and with Hashem's help have never felt the lack.

In This World, we are the channels through which Hashem sends money to those in need. We can choose to be a narrow pipeline, through whom small sums are transferred, and accrue minor merits. Or we can be a wide conduit, through whom Hashem sends vast amounts. The merit for this type of charity is immeasurable.

I was once invited to a fund-raising evening on behalf of the Kol Torah yeshiva in Yerushalayim. I merited sharing the dais with the Rosh Yeshiva, the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Yehudah Schlesinger *shlit”a*.

In order to encourage others to donate, I pledged a respectable sum. Then I doubled my pledge, so others would take an example and do likewise.

At the time of my pledge, I had no idea how I would obtain this sum. I offered a silent prayer that Hashem should help me fulfill my pledge and give the double amount I had promised.

The next night, I participated in the wedding of a friend. As I was leaving the hall, a man ran after me. He handed me a sizeable check which was even greater than the amount I had pledged to the Kol Torah yeshiva.

I lifted my eyes heavenward and thanked Hashem for accepting my prayers. He proved that when one gives, he never loses. On the contrary, he merely opens the pipelines of abundance to rain down, as Chazal exhort us (*Ta'anit* 9a), “Tithe so you may become wealthy.”



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### The Essence of the Mitzvah of Shemittah

At the beginning of the Parshah the Torah writes, “Hashem spoke to Moshe on Har Sinai, saying:” Rashi asks, why does the Torah stress that Hashem told Moshe about Shemittah on Har Sinai – were not all the mitzvot given on Har Sinai? And Rashi explains that just as all the details of the laws of Shemittah were said on Har Sinai, as explicitly stated in the Torah, so too all the details of all the mitzvot, not just their broad outlines, were given at Har Sinai, even though they are not explicitly stated in the Torah.

We can ask why specifically the mitzvah of Shemittah was chosen to teach us this message. Why wasn't a different important mitzvah, such as Shabbat or tefillin, chosen instead?

The answer could be that the Torah chose the mitzvah of Shemittah because its observance requires strong belief in Hashem. We have to believe Hashem will take care of a person's livelihood, even though he himself is not putting forth any effort. When Bnei Yisrael wandered in the Wilderness for forty years, Hashem took care of all their needs by sending them manna from the heavens, and Miriam's Well accompanied them wherever they went to quench their thirst. Not only did Hashem take care of the Jewish people, He also showed concern for the needs of their livestock. A wilderness is an arid land that lacks pasture for sheep and cattle, yet Hashem took care of the animals' needs miraculously, and they survived and thrived despite the harsh desert conditions.

From the way in which Hashem nourished and provided for His children in the Wilderness, and even took care of their animals' needs, we learn of the magnitude of Hashem's kindness and compassion for His children. Hashem wanted to teach us that just as He provided for our every need in the Wilderness for forty years, without any effort on our part, so too He promises each and every person who observes Shemittah with all its stringencies, that He will take care of his livelihood in a miraculous fashion and there is no reason at all for him to worry. The Torah chose to specify that the mitzvah of Shemittah was given on Har Sinai to teach us that a person should not worry about observing this mitzvah. Rather he should strengthen and intensify his faith by recalling how Hashem provided for His children in the Wilderness.

Yet we may wonder, how can the Torah command a person to observe a mitzvah that involves monetary loss? The answer is that if Hashem instructed us to observe this commandment, it is clear we are capable of fulfilling it, for we have already become accustomed to Hashem's Divine Intervention and miracles in the Wilderness. Just as a person must observe Shabbat without worrying and calculating how he will make up the monetary loss from closing his business on Shabbat, so too during Shemittah, which is a Shabbat rest for Hashem, a person must intensify his faith that the One on High will have compassion on him and take care of his needs in an honorable fashion.

## THE SABBATICAL YEAR



1. Since *Peirot shevi'it* are ownerless (*hefker*), they are exempt from the obligation of separating *terumot* and *ma'aserot* (tithing). This applies to produce that has *kedushat shevi'it*, meaning it grew on land belonging to a Jew in Eretz Yisrael.

What does this refer to? Only to produce from a farmer who declared his fruit ownerless. If he did not do so, the produce must be tithed without a blessing.

2. Concerning fruit belonging to a non-Jew who owns land in Eretz Yisrael, if the final act is done by a gentile, these fruits are exempt from *terumot* and *ma'aserot*, as every other year. But if the final act was done by a Jew, he must tithe the produce.

Therefore, if one buys grapes, intended for producing wine, from a gentile, since the Jew makes the wine – the final act – he must separate *terumot* and *ma'aserot*. Even though normally this would be done with a blessing, during Shemittah one does not recite the blessing. He takes the *ma'aser rishon* for himself, and separates from it *ma'aser ani*, which he also keeps for himself. We follow the opinion that produce from Israeli land belonging to a non-Jew does not have *kedushat shevi'it*.

3. If the final act was done by a Jew and therefore the produce must be tithed, *ma'aser ani* must be separated. Some say one separates *ma'aser sheini*, for it doesn't help to separate *ma'aser ani*. We generally follow the first opinion, and the best thing to do, to save oneself from doubt, it to separate the *ma'aser* on condition that it is either *ma'aser ani* or *ma'aser sheini*, and redeem if afterwards on a coin, without a blessing.

### Chazal say:

“Hashem created many things in the world and chose one of them for Him. He created seven days and chose Shabbat, as it says (*Bereishit* 2:3), “Hashem blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” He created years and chose one of them, as it says (*Vayikra* 25:2), “The land shall observe a Shabbat rest for Hashem.” He created lands and chose one of them – Eretz Yisrael, as it says (*Devarim* 11:12), “The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it.” Also, Hashem calls it His Land, as it says (*Yoel* 4:2), “They divided up My Land.” He created nations and chose one of them; this is the Jewish people, as it says (*Devarim* 14:2), “And Hashem has chosen you for Himself to be a treasured people.”

It is not by chance that Hashem chose the seventh day (Shabbat) and the seventh year (Shemittah). Rather, these times are suitable for the revelation of an internal essence. As the Maharal clarifies, every material object has six sides; up, down, and the four sides. The number seven expresses its sacred internal essence (*Tiferet Yisrael* 40). Eretz Yisrael too is the center of all countries, and Am Yisrael, in comparison to the other nations, are like the heart of the body.

This implies that the purpose of resting (on Shabbat and during Shemittah) is to discover the inner soul. During the week a person is engaged in all kinds of occupations and his soul remains hidden. Through resting on Shabbat he gives expression to his soul and can delight in spirituality – uplifting Shabbat meals and Torah study. This helps him understand the purpose of his work during the other six days, and in return this work is blessed.



## The Hidden Tzaddik, Rabbi Yosef Waltoch zt"l

The lineage of Rabbi Yosef Waltoch zt"l can be traced back to his illustrious grandfather, the holy maggid Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlatchov zy"l, a talmid of Rabbeinu Yisrael, the holy Ba'al Shem Tov zy"l.

Rabbi Yosef Waltoch zt"l spent much time in the courts of the Gedolei Yisrael, absorbing their ways and teachings. He knew how to conceal his diverse personality and hide his greatness and righteousness, to the extent that many were unaware of his true stature. The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera zt"l used to stand up in his honor and said about him, "This Jew is a hidden personality," meaning it is very difficult to determine his character since he hid his true spiritual level. The gaon Chacham Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, also stated about him, "He hid his deeds from us."

Rabbi Yosef Waltoch zt"l would often visit the gravesites of tzaddikim throughout

Eretz Yisrael. In both summer and winter, he travelled from place to place, praying and studying with great feeling and arousing the merit of the deceased. He merited wonderful revelations and lofty perceptions and was the conduit for many acts of salvation, in the merit of the souls of these tzaddikim.

Rabbi Waltoch slept very little. He went to sleep very late at night, and despite his fatigue woke up early and prayed at *vatikin* (dawn). It sometimes happened that he spent a long time talking to an unfortunate fellow, and since it was already late, he would spend the rest of the time until daybreak in diligent Torah study. Only after the morning prayers did he finally allow himself some sleep. When he stayed overnight in Yerushalayim he tried to pray Shacharit at the Kotel.

One of his disciples who joined him for Shacharit at the Kotel said: "It happened several times that we left my house, even before daybreak, to go to the Kotel, and exactly then a car drew up right next to us. The driver, who did not know us, said he was driving to the Kotel and asked if we wished to join him..."

It is worthwhile noting Rabbi Yosef's particular caution when it came to matters of holiness. He was always careful that his holy hands should not hang below his waist. A profound expression of this special degree of diligence was demonstrated in the way he carried the two baskets that accompanied him everywhere. These baskets held his holy sefarim on the hidden and revealed sections of Torah, and despite their great weight he never changed the position of his hands: he held the baskets with his hands folded under his chest.

His prayers would bear fruit and many merited salvation from the blessings he uttered with his pure mouth. With passion and joy he wished his acquaintances: "[May you merit] all salvations!" Or, "[May you merit] great salvations!"

Rabbi Yosef Cohen n"y recounts that Rabbi Yosef Waltoch used to stay at his home in Yerushalayim. On one occasion when Rabbi Yosef Cohen went to visit the tzaddik Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera zy"l to ask for a blessing for a particular matter, Baba Meir said to him: "You have a tzaddik in your house whose power of prayer is greater than mine! Why do you come to me?"

Rabbi Yosef's life was short and full of suffering. He suffered from several different ailments, in particular from digestive disorders, a source of great torment. (The Gemara [*Shabbat* 112] states, "Most tzaddikim die from digestive disorders." Rashi explains that their suffering atones for their sins. The Midrash Raba says, "[Digestive disorders] cleanse the intestines of food and the tzaddikim become clean and pure like angels.") The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera zt"l was aware of this suffering, and every time Rabbi Yosef visited his home in Ashdod, Rabbi Meir would pray for Rabbi Yosef and only then would he find relief.

On the 20th of Iyar 5743, Rabbi Yosef, accompanied by two of his disciples, went to pray at the gravesites of tzaddikim. After praying in Meron they set out for Me'arat Ha'idra where he secluded himself for an hour. Following this he told them he did not feel well, so his disciples took him to Tzefat and there he returned his pure soul to the Creator.

May his merit protect us.

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