

# PACHAD DAVID

Ki Tisa



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor 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"o



"When the people saw that Moshe was late in coming down from the mountain, the people gathered against Aharon, and they said to him: "Come on! Make us gods that will go before us, because this man Moshe, who brought us up from the land of Egypt we don't know what has become of him." (Shemot 32:1).

When we learn the Pesukim of the parashah, a question arises; how is it possible to explain that Bnei Yisrael fell to such depths until they wanted to fashion a Calf? After all, they had just witnessed such wondrous miracles, and the Sea had split before them, by which they clearly observed Divine supervision in the world. Furthermore, they saw the Pillar of Fire in the Wilderness and the Pillar of Cloud, which went before them, through which they were able to discern between light and dark, and they clearly perceived the great reward awaiting Torah scholars and the punishment of those who violate their obligation. Thus, how did they sin with the Golden Calf?

The explanation is that regarding Noach it is stated (*Bereishit* 6:9), "Noah walked with God." This implies that Hashem walked before Noach and illuminated the path for him to go. On the other hand, Avraham Avinu was so much greater because he walked before Hashem and did not require assistance in following on the right path, but he overcame the vanities of the world through his own efforts. This explains the error when Am Yisrael wanted Hashem to go before them, even though they had already received the Torah about which it is stated (*Yeshayahu* 58:8), "And your righteousness shall go before you," referring to the Torah. The Torah serves as a protection and shield, and Am Yisrael should not have come up with this demand, but should have rather learned from their Father Avraham, who did not request the assistance from his Creator, but he himself forged his path, even before receiving the Torah. All the more so, Bnei Yisrael, who already had received the Torah, which has the power to protect and shield them, should have progressed through their own efforts.

The demand of Bnei Yisrael was expressed in their question of "Where is Moshe?" This question was out of place, and it was not right to ask it. But, since

## maskil Le'David The Sin of the Golden Calf



they asked it, it caused them to stumble and fall into sin. The source of the question stemmed from the fact that they desired to continue the culture of Egypt, even though they were told to draw away from idolatry. The culture of worshipping idols, which they were used to in Egypt is what induced them to fashion the Golden Calf, since they never completely disengaged from idolatry.

My forefather, the tzaddik Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, zya"o, expands on the topic of learning Torah for the sake of Heaven in his sefer "*Kesef Nivchar*." He writes there that Torah that is learned and observed for the sake of Heaven has the power to save a person, but Torah which is not learned for the sake of Heaven, does not protect him. Thus, a person should take heart from this and strengthen himself in his study of Torah for the sake of Heaven, because only this will save him from his evil inclination when faced with a test. Perhaps since the Torah that was studied by Am Yisrael prior to the giving of the Torah was not for the sake of Heaven, therefore it could not save them from sinning with the Golden Calf. The proof that they were lacking in learning Torah for the sake of Heaven is that when Moshe did not return soon enough, they immediately requested other gods to lead them.

Because of this, it is possible for a person to enter the Beit Haknesset to pray, but when he leaves, he views forbidden sights. Why is this so? Because his prayers were not really sincere and wholehearted, but merely lip service, which does not affect him at all.

When a person's clothing gets dirty superficially, he removes the dirt, but yet the cloth itself remains stained, which are traces of the dirt. This is also the case with regard to sin. It is not enough to remove it superficially, but one must uproot it from the source, so that no trace should remain. This is why Moshe burned the Calf and did not suffice with vanquishing it by uttering the Ineffable Name of Hashem. A tough stain has to be uprooted from the source, and burning the Calf symbolizes the complete elimination of any trace.

18 Adar 5783

11 March 2023

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### Shabbat Parah



### Hilula

- 18 Adar – Rabbi Yisrael Yakov Fisher, Ra'avad of the Eidah Chareidit
- 19 Adar – Rabbi Shimon Chirarri
- 20 Adar – Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rosh Yeshiva of *Kol Torah*
- 21 Adar – Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, author of *Noam Elimelech*
- 22 Adar – Rabbi Elazar Halevi ben Tubu
- 23 Adar – Rabbi Menachem Siriro
- 24 Adar – Rabbi Eliyahu Hacohen author of *Shevet Mussar*





## WORDS OF THE SAGES

### Sensitivity to the Widow and Orphan

**“But his attendant, Joshua, the son of Nun, a lad, would not depart from the tent”** (*Shemot* 33:11).

There are four things Chazal list which needs reinforcement. One of them is the study of Torah. Chazal ask (*Berachot* 32b), “From where do we learn that Torah is one of them? From the verse (*Yehoshua* 1:7), ‘Just be strong and very courageous.’ ‘Strong’ refers to being strong in Torah.”

The *gaon* Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg, *zt”l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Ohr, asks: how could it be that Yehoshua would require strengthening if he did not leave the study hall?

He explains that the answer lies in the words of Rashi who states that “There are four things that need strengthening” does not mean a person should strengthen himself after he became weak and was slack. Rather the implication is that each and every person must *constantly* strengthen himself in these areas, even the greatest individual, so he should not allow weakness to overcome him. Even Yehoshua needed constant strengthening in order to remain on his exalted level of “a lad, would not depart from the tent,” in every situation he would encounter as a leader, fighting the battles for Hashem’s sake. All the more so must every Jew study Torah diligently according to his level so he should never forsake it.

We may wonder why this verse is stated in the midst of the account of the sin of the Golden Calf.

The Netziv of Volozhin explains that the Torah wrote this verse specifically here to teach us that even though it was a time of confusion, when the Satan showed the Jews a vision of Moshe lying dead in a coffin suspended in the air, nevertheless Yehoshua remained steadfast in spirit and faith and was still “a lad, [who] would not depart from the tent.”

In a similar vein, Harav Chaim Kanievsky, *zt”l*, quoted the *gaon* Rabbi Naftali Zvi Rif who points out that although Yehoshua was the prominent disciple of Moshe Rabbeinu, and perhaps now his job would be to protest and demonstrate the violation of the honor of the Torah, nevertheless, he sat in the study hall learning Torah. This teaches us that the job of Torah scholars is only to sit and learn Torah and not join protests and demonstrations.

The issue of how and when to protest should be left to the judgment of the leaders of the generation, and not decided by students whose duty it is to toil in the study of Torah, our lifeline and the length of our days.



## FROM THE TREASURY

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

### The Essence of the Half a Shekel

**“The L-rd spoke to Moshe, saying: “When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to the L-rd an atonement for his soul when they are counted; then there will be no plague among them when they are counted”** (*Shemot* 30:11-12).

Parashat Ki Tisa opens with Hashem’s request for Moshe to command Bnei Yisrael to bring a Half a Shekel in order to count the people. The Half a Shekel is considered an atonement, which affords protection and defense for Am Yisrael against any plague. Further on in the parshah we find that Hashem commands Bnei Yisrael about the mitzvah of Shabbat, as it is stated (*Shemot* 31:14), “Therefore, keep the Sabbath, for it is a sacred thing for you. Those who desecrate it shall be put to death.” Right afterward, the Torah discusses the sin of the Golden Calf. After the people saw that Moshe was late in coming down from the mountain, they hurried to fashion a Golden Calf and turned it into their god and leader.

Sometimes it seems that with only a penny we cannot perform kindness. But really the opposite is true. By constantly giving the little that one has, he trains himself to acquire good character traits, and he intensifies his fear of Heaven. Chazal say (*Avot* 3:15), “Everything depends on the abundance of good deeds,” and the Rambam explains that it is preferable for a person to give charity one hundred time and give a small amount each time, than to give a large sum at once, since giving constantly, even small amounts, trains a person to give and refines his character.

However, unfortunately we find that people are prepared to invest many millions in luxuries and vanities, being concerned with their material needs, but when it comes to giving charity and practicing lovingkindness with their money, they immediately begin to calculate every cent and are not able to open their pockets and provide money for the needy. A person should be aware that hedonism and investing one’s money in all sorts of vanities may bring him to the depths of depravity and idol worship. On the other hand, a person who gives money for charity, even if he gives only a small amount, nevertheless, the act of giving elevates him and makes him a better person. This, then is the connection between the Half a Shekel and the Sin of the Golden Calf; the juxtaposition of the subjects teaches us about the painful consequences of those who waste their money on empty vanities, even when it is small amounts.

We can learn from this that sometimes inspiration and excitement in the service of Hashem are acquired in seemingly small things, in the equivalent of the Half a Shekel, which penny by penny amounted to an enormous sum, enough to buy a *nedavah* offering. Likewise, a person’s service of Hashem is also acquired by seemingly trivial things that are almost overlooked, but ultimately they are the things that elevate a person.



## WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

### A Case of Heavenly Protection

My holy father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, *zy"ta*, was once on his way from Morocco to Eretz Yisrael. He suddenly realized that his suitcase, containing his money and passport, was missing. He was greatly distressed by this. He immediately turned to Hashem in supplication. He asked that the merit of his father, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, should protect him, and his suitcase should remain untouched.

His prayers were heeded. Father retraced his steps and found his suitcase intact, resting exactly where he had left it.

Years later, I found myself traveling by train to Paris. As I was disembarking, there was a great tumult. Many people wished to get on the train, and there was a lot of pushing. As I tried to make my way off the train before the doors closed. I forgot my valise, which contained my *divrei Torah*, as well as money, passports, and official documents which were necessary for my journey.

I only realized a while later that I was missing my valise. I became very distraught. I was upset about losing the many handwritten *divrei Torah*, into which I had invested tremendous effort. It is the spiritual acquisitions which I amass in this world that will escort me on my final journey and speak in my defense in the World to Come. In contrast, the loss of money and passports would prove a headache and inconvenience merely in this world.

As my father before me, I turned to Hashem, asking Him to allow me to find my valise, in the merit of my holy ancestors. I returned to the place where I thought I had left it. It was safe and sound, waiting patiently for my return.

My companions had already given up on ever finding the lost valise. They had told me there was no chance I would ever retrieve it. Imagine their surprise at seeing it in my hands. They thought their eyes were playing tricks on them. Finding the valise amid all the chaos of the train station was nothing short of a miracle of the highest order.

**I, too, was stunned by this turn of events. The train station is a place abuzz with humanity, as thousands pass by every hour. How is it possible to locate a lone valise amidst all the hubbub and hullabaloo there? And how could it be that no one else noticed a forsaken valise?**

**We must train ourselves to believe, unquestioningly, that Hashem can do anything, even that which contradicts the normal course of events, rendering the seeing blind, if He is so disposed, as the *pasuk* states, "They have eyes but cannot see." In this manner, I reclaimed my valise and continued on my way.**

## CHAZAK U'BARUCH



Until now we have learned about the virtue of Ahavat Yisrael, and now we will discuss the other side: What is considered baseless hatred, which the Torah severely prohibits.

Sometimes people may argue that they do not, G-d forbid, hate any Jew. They love every single Jew, but unfortunately there are Jews who simply "do not get along with them"... They do not hate them... they just do not want anything to do with them.

There are a lot of reasons for this. For example: in the context of an argument they had about one thing or another, or because of dispute between neighbors, or even for ideological reasons.

The Chafetz Chaim (*Ahavat Yisrael* chapter 2) cites the words of the Gemara in tractate Sanhedrin (27b), which clarifies that a friend or an enemy is ineligible to give testimony and judge their fellow. The Mishnah defines the terms: "A friend - is a *"shoshvin"* (an intimate friend of one's youth). An enemy - any man who by reason of enmity, has not spoken to one for three days."

Let us reflect upon this:

This is describing two good people who never dreamed of hurting one another. But what? They simply "did not get along"... They harbored some resentment which caused them to keep a distance from each other. Nevertheless, the Gemara makes it clear to us that they are considered "enemies" to each other, to the extent that they are suspected of attesting to false testimony out of hatred!

In any event, it is clear that the person who does not get along with his fellow because of resentment to him, and therefore he "keeps his distance" from his fellow and avoids talking with him - is considered an enemy! And if he is considered an enemy for the purposes of testimony, and for judging - he is also considered one who practices baseless hatred, transgressing the prohibition of "You shall not hate your brother in your heart," which he transgresses every minute!

Furthermore, in the commentary of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, on the *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 19:17): "You shall not hate your brother in your heart," we find a broader definition of "hatred." It would seem more appropriate if the Torah would state: "You shall not hate in your heart your brother," whereby first and foremost the concept of "hatred" is juxtaposed to "in your heart," and only afterward it should state the person whom one is forbidden to hate - which is "your brother!" Why, then, did the Torah choose this order of words?

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains:

"This describes the measure of hatred which Hashem prohibits. A person should not say that what he exhibits is not really considered hatred, since hatred is only absolute hatred, when one seeks calamity or disgrace to come upon his fellow. But merely "writing him off in my heart" is not considered hatred. Therefore, the Torah specifically juxtaposed "You shall not hate" with the word "your brother," to teach us that the measure of hatred that the Torah is prohibiting is even when one still feels kinship like a brother. The definition is: one who keeps his fellow at a little distance in his heart, he transgresses "You shall not hate."

In other words, the Torah assumes that among all the Jews, love and brotherhood should prevail, such as between brothers. Any distance between one person and another, until the brotherhood between them is no longer strong as the brotherhood of one's brother - is defined as hatred, and is included in the prohibition of "You shall not hate your brother in your heart!"

This signifies that the only way in which we can avoid transgressing at every passing moment the Torah prohibition of "You shall not hate your brother in your heart" - is by strictly observing the mitzvah: "Love your fellow as yourself"... Only if we will instill in our hearts love for each and every Jew, who are our brothers, our flesh, we will be able to insure that hatred will not spread among us, and fester in our hearts.



## MEN OF FAITH

### Moreinu v'Rabbeinu tells an unbelievable story

My host in Morocco, R' Mordechai Knafo, has strong faith in Hashem and an unshakable faith in the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

A few years ago, he told me that his daughter arranged to go to France in order to take an important exam. However, she suddenly discovered that her passport was lost.

R' Knafo was very troubled by the loss, because making a new passport in Morocco was a complex bureaucratic procedure.

Ultimately, he knew what to do: He began to pray to Hashem that in the merit of the tzaddik, he should find the passport. Throughout the night, he lit candles, while praying fervently to Hashem, until he was sure that during the night "someone" would deliver the passport to their house.

His wife begged him to get some sleep, but he refused, saying, "I will not sleep until the passport arrives at our house."

"How will the passport get to our house in middle of the night?" his wife argued.

"I believe that in the merit of the tzaddikim it will arrive," he answered. At three a.m., R' Knafo heard knocking on his door. He opened the door and saw a Moroccan man in the entrance holding a case in his hand.

R' Knafo grabbed the case from him.

"Why are you taking the case away?"

Instead of answering, R' Knafo opened it up and took out his daughter's passport. When the passport was safely in his hands,

he asked the man, "Where did you find the case?"

"Near the French Embassy."

"Why did you come to return it?"

"The truth is, I did not want to return the passport, and I was planning to rip it up. But, my mother came to me in a dream and told me to hurry and return the passport to its owner. 'If you want to honor your elders,' she advised, 'go assist the owners by returning the passport to them.'"

The Arabs of Morocco are known for honoring their parents. Thus, he proceeded to fulfill his mother's request by returning the lost property to its owner. R' Knafo handed the man a sum of money to compensate him for his troubles, and bade him farewell.

This story teaches us the power of faith in tzaddikim. This is not a story that happened hundreds of years ago. The truth is that any person can reach this level of faith, as the Navi, Chavakuk, says, "But the righteous person shall live though his faith." Even a simple person can be considered a righteous person, if he possesses faith.

Through faith, every person can merit wondrous miracles, just like great tzaddikim. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the miracle that occurred. However, it is not easy to achieve such a level of faith. One must work hard to acquire it, strengthening himself constantly.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT



### The Cure Before the Blow

Chazal teach us about demonstrating respect toward Torah scholars from the example in the parashah, as it is stated (*Shemot* 33:8), "And it would be that when Moshe would go out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand." Hence, one must rise before the elderly, and before the wise, and the Av Beit Din, and the king.

Chazal advise us: Honor the doctor before you need him, so that when the need arises, he will come to your aid. This signifies above all: One must honor Hashem [by fulfilling His mitzvot], Who is the Doctor of all flesh and blood, before trouble comes upon him!

One of the ways in which one honors Hashem is by honoring the sages of the Torah and its scholars, as Chazal teach: "You shall fear Hashem, your G-d, as well as [including] Torah scholars."

## GUARD YOUR TONGUE



### The Prohibition Includes Everyone

The prohibition of relating *lashon hara* also concerns speaking derogatorily about ignorant people, because they too are included in Hashem's people, whom He brought out of Egypt. All the more so if he is a Torah scholar. Certainly one who slanders a Torah scholar sins to a greater degree. Chazal say, anyone who slanders a Torah scholar after he died deserves Gehinom. Many times he also transgresses the prohibition of degrading a Torah scholar, and the severe punishment is well-known for degrading a Torah scholar, as it is stated (*Bamidbar* 15:31), "For he scorned the word of Hashem and broke His commandment; that person will surely be cut off, his sin is upon him."

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