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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto** shlit'a
 Son of the tzaddik Rabbi **Moshe Ahron Pinto** zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi **Chaim Pinto** zy"ta

maskil Le'David

Hashem Provides the Machine – We Must Provide Soap and Water

“For on this day he shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed” (Vayikra 16:30).

Yom Kippur, by its very essence, is a holy day and has the power to atone for one's sins. However not every person merits this atonement – only those who have prepared themselves and repented in approach of this great and awesome day. This can be compared to a washing machine into which dirty clothes are deposited. In order for the clothes to emerge clean, you have to add laundry detergent and water, and then you must choose an appropriate washing program. Now the clothes can come out spotlessly clean, even if they were very stained. On the other hand, if we put dirty clothes in the machine and do not take the time to add detergent and water, or set the machine to the appropriate program, the clothes will remain dirty.

And when the stains are really tough, a regular washing cycle in the machine is not enough. Dry cleaning is necessary, in which special laundering techniques and strong substances are used to remove the dirt. However this costs much more money than doing laundry at home.

This parable helps us understand that in order to be cleansed and purified from our sins on Yom Kippur due to the very holiness of the day, one must work hard and prepare for this. Clearly, the more a person sins and disobeys Hashem's word, the greater will be the work required of him. Hashem provides us with the “machine” – Yom Kippur – but we need to provide the water and the soap, which means sincere repentance.

A wedding day is preceded by countless preparations and arrangements: meetings with various providers, such as a photographer, caterer and band, choosing a hall, flowers, a beautiful suit/gown suitable for this significant event and altered to the groom or bride's exact measurements, and many other tasks that must be taken care of. When the big and small details are finalized, the groom and bride come to their wedding calmly and happily.

Hashem expects us to arrive at this great and awesome day after having prepared ourselves spiritually. For this purpose Hashem has given us special days, beginning on Rosh Chodesh Elul, during which He is very close to us, as it is says, “Seek Hashem when He can be found; call upon Him when He is near.” It also says, “Hashem is close to all who call upon Him – to all who call upon Him sincerely.” One who truly seeks closeness to Hashem will find Him. But to find, one must search. And one who is not wise enough to seek Hashem and return to Him during the month of Elul is given another opportunity during the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* (Ten Days of Repentance), between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The holy Zohar says that Hashem's Kingship does not shine in the world until Yom Kippur. This means that although Rosh Hashanah is the day we declare Hashem as King, the complete and true Kingship of Hashem occurs on Yom Kippur. To clarify: on Rosh Hashanah when we crown Hashem as King over us, there are those who have not yet been aroused to repent. Their laundry is still soiled. They may not have even bothered putting their clothes into the machine, or maybe they did, but did not bother to add detergent and switch on the machine. Therefore, Hashem gives us ten more special days which are auspicious for repentance and atonement. If utilized, when the great and awesome day arrives we can all stand before Hashem with our clothes as white as snow, cleansed from all iniquity and sin. And in this state, when the entire Am Yisrael is clean and pure, in fulfillment of “before Hashem shall you be cleansed,” we will merit accepting Hashem's sovereignty completely.

Unfortunately, many times after the great inspiration of these Days of Awe, we fall into our old habits; although we promised Hashem we would never repeat certain sins, we once again stain the garments of our souls with transgressions. Hashem confuses the Satan during the days of mercy and forgiveness, but if we continue to sin after these special days are over, it becomes all the more difficult to overcome our *yetzer hara* – it is then granted permission to make us stumble. We must realize, one wash cycle – even a very thorough one – during the Days of Awe is not enough! It is essential to continuously cleanse and purify ourselves before Hashem; we do not want to reach a situation where our clothes are so stained, they are no longer possible to clean.

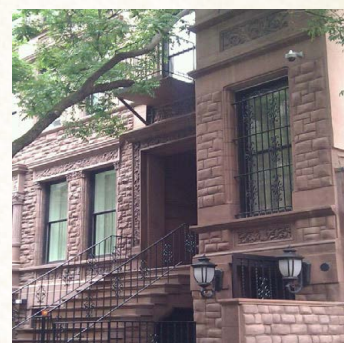
May we merit our garments becoming whitened like snow and may we always shine like the light of the full moon!

5 Tishrei 5786
 27 September 2025

1131

Vayeilech

Shabbat Shuva



Hilula

5 Tishrei
 Rabbi Menachem Halevi Pollak

6 Tishrei
 Rabbi Yisrael Tvisig,
 the Admor of Mattersdorf

7 Tishrei
 Leah Imeinu

8 Tishrei
 Rabbi Avner Yisrael
 Hatzarfati, Av Beit Din Fez

9 Tishrei
 Rabbi Yitzchak Zev
 Soloveitchik of Brisk

10 Tishrei
 Rabbi David Knafo, Av Beit
 Din Mogador (Essaouira)

11 Tishrei
 Rabbi Avraham Avish,
 author of *Birkat Avraham*





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Moshe Did Not Wait for Bnei Yisrael to Approach Him

“Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Yisrael” (*Devarim* 31:1).

The commentaries ask why the verse stresses that Moshe went to Bnei Yisrael. And why did Bnei Yisrael not honor Moshe by going to him?

Rabbi Shimon Chavi *zt”l*, explains the following in his *sefer Noam Siach*: Bnei Yisrael knew that Moshe had to teach them the entire Torah with all its six hundred and thirteen mitzvot. He had not yet told them about the commandment of *hakhel* (when the king reads from *Sefer Devarim* to the entire nation) or the mitzvah of writing a *sefer Torah*. They were afraid of going to Moshe to receive these remaining two mitzvot since they knew that afterwards Moshe’s role in This World would come to an end.

Yet Moshe Rabbeinu did not wish to delay Bnei Yisrael from entering the land, therefore he went to them to teach them these two mitzvot. Thus he completed the giving over of all six hundred and thirteen mitzvot.

The Final Decision Lies in the Hands of the Leader

“For you shall come with this people to the Land” (*Devarim* 31:7).

Rashi explains the words “For you shall *come* with this people”: Moshe told Yehoshua that the elders of the generation will be with him, meaning he would share leadership with them and defer to their wisdom and advice. However, Hashem said to Yehoshua, “For you shall *bring* Bnei Yisrael to the Land that I have sworn to them” (*Devarim* 31:23) – bring them against their will; force them. It is all dependent on *you*, for a generation cannot have more than one leader.”

Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman *hy”d*, asks how Moshe Rabbeinu could change the words he was told by Hashem when speaking to Yehoshua and give him a different message?

He answers that in fact both “messages” are correct. It is certainly true that the leader of the generation must listen to the wisdom and advice of its elders and Sages, and it is forbidden for him to make decisions based on his own opinion alone. But, after hearing all their different opinions, he alone has the authority to decide the correct course of action.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Children Can Break Through

During the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*, Rabbi Yaakov Eidelstein *zt”l* points out that we must increase our good deeds ever more so as Yom Kippur approaches. He quotes the Alter of Kelm who offers a wonderful piece of advice on how to succeed in performing many good deeds in a short space of time, tipping the scales to our benefit. There is one thing through which we can gain countless merits: Undertake to perform good deeds.

The reason behind this is that the undertaking is regarded as though the action has already been completed. Rabbeinu Yonah comments on the verse, “The Children of Israel went and did.” He asks, did they in fact do it immediately? Weren’t they commanded on the first day of the month to take a lamb for the Pesach sacrifice on the tenth of the month? Indeed, the fact that they accepted upon themselves to do what Hashem had commanded was considered as though they had already carried out the task! The Jewish people’s recognition of Hashem’s Will that they perform the mitzvah was so strong, it was considered as if they had actually done it!

Regarding the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*, if a Jew commits to performing specific actions, they are regarded as having been fulfilled. The same is true regarding the reward for the mitzvah. If his commitment is sincere, “Through his loyalty (lit. faith) he shall live,” and he will merit both This World and the Next. “For they are our life” refers to the World to Come, “and the length of our days” refers to life in This World.

The Maggid of Dubna delivered a sermon on the first night of *selichot* when children were also present. He turned to them and said, “Dear children! We need your help! You need to help us pass through so we can reach the inner gate, so our prayers can reach behind the partition!” To help the young ones understand, he would tell a parable of a father and his young son who were on their way home, when they realized robbers were chasing them. The robbers were still some distance away, so the father and son decided to run home as quickly as possible, lock the door and be safe. And so they ran, reached the outer gate of the courtyard, but to their dismay it was locked!

The father searched but could not find the key. The robbers were rapidly approaching; every moment was critical. The father then noticed a small window on the side that only a young child could fit through. But the window was high up, the child could not reach. He said to his child, “I carried you on my shoulders when you felt tired. Now it is your turn to save both of our lives! Stand on my shoulders and climb inside through the small window at the top of the gate. Then quickly come and open the gate from the inside. Don’t be afraid; our lives depend on this!”

The child climbed through the window and their lives were saved.

We too may find the gates of Heaven closed. But here and there are small openings, too narrow for adults to pass through. The many years have left their mark and we are soiled from our sins. But the young children are still pure; they can pass through these narrow portholes.

“Dear children,” said the Maggid of Dubna, “Concentrate well during the *selichot* prayers. Say the Thirteen Attributes with intention: ‘Hashem, Hashem, G-d, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to anger...’ And just as Hashem is compassionate, so you should be compassionate. Awaken Heavenly mercy! You children can do so much more than we adults! You can open the iron gates for us from the inside!”



FROM THE TREASURY

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

Torah is More Beloved Than All Sacrifices

An essential component of teshuva is a Jew's undertaking to diligently study Torah, starting now, today! Not a single day should pass without setting some time for Torah study, come what may.

The merit of Torah is so powerful, it atones for wrongdoings.

Fortunate is the one who engages in Torah study day and night, for this atones for even the most serious transgressions. As Chazal say (*Yalkut Shimoni, Hoshea*), "Hashem said, 'Your Torah study is so dear to me, more than all the sacrifices in the Torah and all the sacrifices Shlomo offered before Me.'" Chazal also say (*Rosh Hashanah 18a*), "With peace-offerings and meal-offerings he does not receive atonement, rather it is Torah that atones for him, and fortunate is the one who toils in Torah and gives pleasure to his Creator."

We are also told (*Vayikra Rabba*, section 25), "It is a tree of life for those who grasp it." Rav Huna said, 'If a person stumbles with serious transgressions and is liable to death by Heaven, what should he do in order to live? If he is used to learning one page [of Torah] he should learn two pages, and if he is used to learning one chapter of Mishna he should learn two.'"

I found a beautiful hint for this idea from Yom Kippur, the primary day for repentance and forgiveness. We are told about this holy day (*Vayikra 16:30*), "For on this day He shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed." The first letters of "כי ביום הזה" ("for on this day") have the same numerical value as "ק" (pure). How can a person merit becoming "pure" and clean from all sin and iniquity? Through "הזה" – "this," which has the same numerical value as "טוב" (good), and there is no good other than the Torah, as it says, "For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah" (*Mishlei 4:2*). All those who engage in Torah together with repentance, will merit forgiveness and they become pure and clean from all impurity and filth.

The holy *sefarim* tell us that on Yom Kippur the Satan does not rule and no angel is allowed to accuse the Jewish people. Whoever comes to speak negatively about them and tries to prevent their repentance from being accepted willingly, Hashem immediately removes him and lovingly and willingly accepts our repentance.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Strengthening our Closeness to Hashem

Once I was in New York during the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*. Someone approached me and related a miracle involving his baby daughter – a literal "resurrection of the dead":

Following many years of marriage during which he and his wife longed for a child, they were finally gifted with a daughter. One day when she was two years old, the little girl disappeared...

After a quick search around the house, they discovered the worst. They found their daughter in their pool, floating on the surface of the water. The father immediately pulled her out, but she was unconscious and had no pulse *r"l*. The rescue forces who were summoned to the scene tried to perform CPR; however their efforts were unsuccessful. They sorrowfully informed the parents they had done all they could, and covered her small body.

The shocked and heartbroken parents did not give up. They began crying out to Hashem with all their strength. Their cries that emanated from their desperate, broken hearts were heard from afar. Everyone came together in prayer, pouring out their hearts to Hashem, the One who grants life, pleading for His salvation.

Indeed, an enormous miracle occurred! The little girl suddenly showed signs of life! The sheet began to move! The paramedics could not believe their eyes! They immediately stifled the excitement saying it was still too early to rejoice – even if this girl lives, she probably suffered brain damage due to lack of oxygen.

She was quickly rushed to hospital where the doctors carried out numerous tests to determine her condition. Miraculously, she was completely healthy and had suffered no damage! The parents' happiness knew no bounds. They thanked and praised Hashem for their daughter who was born anew!

The father continued his amazing story, "At that moment when I cried out to Hashem and begged Him to save my daughter's life, I felt such an immense closeness to Him. In those fateful moments that seemed to me like eternity, I understood salvation is in Hashem's hands alone, and we have no one to lean on but our Father in heaven... With this awareness, my prayers emanated from the depths of my heart..."

When I heard this, I thought to myself, "If that father had maintained the inspiration and spiritual elevation he experienced during that challenging moment, and nurtured the strong connection that developed between him and Hashem, he undoubtedly could have reached lofty levels in his *avodat Hashem*."

In fact, this is the obligation of each and every Jew. Whenever we feel a deep connection to Hashem, we should seek to deepen and enhance this intimate bond instead of resting on our achievements.

ZECHER TZADDIK LIYRACHA



Rabbi Yehuda Leib Ashlag zt"l, the Ba'al Hasulam

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Ashlag, known as the "Ba'al Hasulam" after his huge treatise on the holy Zohar, was born in Poland. He absorbed his main approach to Torah from the Rabbanim of the Gur Yeshiva in Warsaw.

His passion for learning the wisdom of Kabbalah took root already in his youth. It is said he used to hide pages of the Zohar and the writings of the Arizal inside his Gemara. He wished to establish the study of Zohar in Polish *yeshivot*, and to that end even met with rabbanim and *admorim*, requesting their agreement. However, they did not comply.

After a short term of living with his father-in-law in Porisów, he moved to Warsaw where he was ordained as rabbi and served as *dayan* for sixteen years. During this period he met someone known as a merchant, who was in fact a hidden Kabbalist. In his writings Rabbi Ashlag refers to this person as "My holy teacher zt"l", and it was he who taught Kabbalah to Rabbi Ashlag.

Following the death of his master he decided to immigrate to Eretz Yisrael. On the 16th of Tishrei 5682 he arrived in Eretz Yisrael, and when he heard there was a yeshiva of Kabbalists in Yerushalayim, called the Beit El Yeshiva, he settled in the Old City of Yerushalayim. According to the testimony of his grandson, Rabbi Simcha Ashlag, already during the days of the First World War Rabbi Ashlag would often lament the imminent destruction of the world. He warned of the Holocaust soon to take place in Europe, and of the great danger this would pose for the Jewish people.

He arrived in Eretz Yisrael with nothing. He did not want to benefit from his rabbinical certification, so in order to support himself he engaged in processing hides and producing soap, using a soap machine he brought with him from Poland. However, it did not take long for him to become famous for his greatness in

Torah, and he was soon appointed rabbi and *dayan* in the Givat Shaul neighborhood.

In 5686 the Ba'al Hasulam travelled to London and remained there for about a year and a half, not leaving his house at all. During this time he wrote his first *sefarim*, *Panim Me'erot* and *Panim Masbirot*, commentaries on the *sefer Etz Chaim* of the holy Arizal. These were a great innovation in the world of Kabbalah, because until then no systematic commentary had been published on the Arizal's *sefer*. In his *sefer* Rabbi Ashlag presents a method with wonderful, clear principles and rulings. In the year 5693 he began composing his huge work *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (consisting of sixteen sections and more than two thousand pages), which includes all the writings of the holy Arizal. In this masterpiece he grouped passages from all the writings of the Arizal, not according to when they were written, but according to the sequence of spiritual positions, in the way of cause and effect.

In 5703 the Ba'al Hasulam began his huge composition: the commentary *Hasulam* on

the holy Zohar. He devoted his entire day to writing this commentary, writing for more than eighteen hours a day with enormous devotion, at great financial and physical cost. He said then, "This commentary will allow people to learn the Zohar as they learn Chumash with Rashi." He also stated that 150 years after the compilation of *Hasulam*, children will study it in the Talmud Torah.

After completing the writing of this great work, the Ba'al Hasulam's health began deteriorating steadily. He felt his end was drawing near, and therefore made a final trip to Tzefat and Meron, where he prepared a great feast for his *talmidim*. None of his students understood that this was in fact a farewell feast.

On the day of his passing, in the middle of the holy Yom Kippur 5715, the Ba'al Hasulam ordered the prayer to begin two hours earlier. When the *chazan* recited the words, "With long life I will satisfy him, and I will show him My salvation," he returned his pure and holy soul to his Maker.



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

"And let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun"

If by not speaking up a person will only suffer embarrassment but not monetary loss, it is certainly forbidden to relate the incident. Moreover, he must not be troubled by this embarrassment at all, because through this act of remaining silent he is considered as one of Hashem's beloved, and his face will shine like the light of the sun, as Chazal say, "Those who are insulted yet do not insult, hear their disgrace yet do not retort, about them the verse says, 'And let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun.'"



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

Exciting update: With *siyata diShmaya*, the *shiurim* of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit"a, are now available in Hebrew, English, French and Spanish

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