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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

Today is the Birthday of the World

Parashat Nitzavim is always read on a Shabbos close to Rosh Hashana. This shows us that there is a distinct connection between this *parsha* and Rosh Hashana, the day when all the Jewish people stand in judgment before Hashem. We know that Hashem started creating the world on the twenty-fifth of Elul, and on Rosh Hashana G-d created man – the crown of Creation.

On the same day that G-d created Adam, He put him in Gan Eden and warned him not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Despite this warning, Adam did not withstand the temptation, and he ate from of the Tree of Knowledge. Originally G-d wanted to judge Adam immediately following his sin, but since Shabbat had already begun, G-d judged him and banished him from Gan Eden only after Shabbat.

The wording of the prayer, "Today is the birthday of the world," needs to be understood. If the first day of creation was the twenty-fifth of Elul, not Rosh Hashana, why do we consider Rosh Hashana to be the birthday of the creation of the world?

On Rosh Hashana man was created, and since the entire purpose of creation was for his sake, we therefore consider this day to be the birthday of the world.

Hashem took the Jewish people out of Mitzrayim only for the Torah. Hashem redeemed Am Yisrael because He knew that we would be willing to accept the Torah; otherwise we and our children would still be enslaved in Mitzrayim. Clearly it was the merit of accepting the Torah which enabled Am Yisrael to be redeemed (*Shemot*, *Rashi* 3:4).

So too, the purpose of creating the world was for mankind, and if not for man, there would have been no reason for creation of the world. Since mankind is the crown and essence of Creation, the day Adam was created (Rosh Hashana) is considered the birthday of the world.

In his *sefer*, the Ohev Yisrael zy"ta questions why Moshe Rabbeinu said (*Devarim* 29:9), "You are standing today, all of you," and after that mentions in detail, "the heads of your tribes, your elders..." Doesn't the wording "all of you" include all the different ranks? Why did Moshe Rabbeinu feel a need to detail all the positions when he had already stated "all of you?"

We can explain this with the understanding that on Rosh Hashana Hashem judges not only the Jewish people but actually the entire world – all living things, plants, inanimate objects, Jews, and non-Jews. What is the determining factor for the fate of the world for the coming year? The spiritual state of the Jewish people. If the Jewish people are connected to Torah and are careful to listen to G-d's voice, then Hashem will judge the world for good, but if G-d forbid the Jewish people turn their backs on Hashem and His Torah, then Hashem is harsh with His judgment for the entire world – they are all stricken because of the sins of Am Yisrael.

Therefore, the words "all of you" hint to the entire creation which is judged on Rosh Hashana. The description that Moshe Rabbeinu added, "the heads of your tribes, your elders...", refers to the spiritual level of the Jewish people at that time which influences the judgement for the whole world.

We must take these words to heart for our *avodat Hashem* all year long, not just during the Days of Judgment. When Hashem sees His children constantly doing His Will, not only during these days of mercy and forgiveness, then Hashem will use His *middah* of mercy to determine the decree for the entire world and for the Jewish people in particular, for a positive verdict, for salvation, and for solace. Amen, may it be His Will.

1 Tishrei 5787

12 September 2026

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Rosh Hashana



Hilula

1 Tishrei

Rabbi Yehuda A'yish

2 Tishrei

Rabbi Yosef Rozovski

3 Tishrei

Rabbi Yosef Vital

4 Tishrei

Rabbi Avraham Ben Yechiel

5 Tishrei

Rabbi Baruch Sholom HaLevi Ashlag

6 Tishrei

Rabbi Aryeh Leib, the "Saba of Shpoli"

7 Tishrei

Zevulun ben Yaakov Avinu a"h





WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

A Condition for Life

A certain young man was eons away from a life of Torah and mitzvot. Although his brother lived in Lyon, my hometown, this boy had never heard of me. That is, until his life took a 180-degree turn. This is how it happened:

The young man was involved in a tragic car accident and was in critical condition. In spite of numerous operations and various procedures, he remained unconscious. His medical condition was so severe that his doctors despaired of his ever recovering. His brother, who lives in Lyon, contacted our yeshiva there. He urgently asked the secretary, R' Shimon Halimi z"l, if he could speak to me. At the time, I was with my family in Nice. My devoted secretary told the man it was impossible to reach me. But he would not give up. He asked the secretary to grant him a personal favor. His brother was lying in a hospital in Marseille, between two worlds. The secretary took down his brother's name. He then phoned me and asked that I pray for him in the merit of my holy ancestors, that he be completely cured.

The very next day, the young man opened his eyes and completely regained consciousness. His first words were, "Where is Rabbi David Pinto?"

At this sight, his family members themselves almost went into a state of shock. Besides for his return to life, they were taken aback by his question. He had never met me or known about me. But they hurried to reply, "Rabbi David Pinto is not here just now. He is in Nice."

The boy accepted this answer. Then he asked them to provide him with tzitzit and tefillin, items which he had never before touched. His dazed family rushed to fulfill his order. Then they asked what this was all about. The boy turned to everyone gathered and explained:

"When I was in a coma, I felt myself being lifted heavenward. There I was greeted by the souls of my departed ancestors. They had come to accompany me on my final journey, for I was about to leave the lower world. I was deathly afraid and refused to join them. Suddenly, I heard the words, 'Let him be and allow him to return to the living. Harav David Pinto is praying on his behalf in the merit of his holy ancestors.' Before allowing me to return, I was given an ultimatum. I must undertake to wear tzitzit and tefillin every single day. Then my *neshamah* returned to my body, and I opened my eyes." This was the boy's hair-raising story.

Baruch Hashem, the boy made steady improvement, both physically and spiritually. He merited greatly increasing his knowledge of Judaism and acceptance of Hashem. To this day, he is scrupulous about wearing tzitzit and tefillin every day. He has merited marrying and is building a true Jewish home, sanctifying Hashem's Name in the world.



MEN OF FAITH

You will never lose by giving *tzedakah*

R' Ishua Deri came to Mogador in 5759 together with his wife, to join in the *hilula* of the *tzaddik* Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol.

Before joining the *hilula*, R' Deri decided to visit Moreinu Rav David Pinto *shlit"a*, to receive his blessings. However, he did not have money to offer the Rav for charity, as was customary. He only had some savings, which he had put away for his personal needs.

His wife sensed his hesitation and advised him, "Do not approach the Rav if you do not have money to donate for charity." However, R' Deri did not agree with his wife and told her, "We do have savings, and I can offer them to the Rav."

His wife argued against this plan, "If you give away all our savings to the Rav, from where will we have money for the approaching holidays of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot?"

He responded simply, "May Hashem have mercy on us."

His wife continued her attempts to dissuade him from going to speak to the Rav, but he walked into the office and placed an envelope on the table containing one thousand francs. When he left the room, his wife cried, "How could you give the Rav all our savings?"

R' Deri stood his ground, "How is it possible to go to the *hilula* of a *tzaddik* and not give his descendant money for *tzedakah*?"

"In that case, you could have donated a quarter of the amount; you didn't need to give away all the money we had saved!" His wife continued to protest and grumble.

R' Deri calmed her down and asserted, "In this merit, Hashem will perform miracles for us, so we will be able to celebrate the holidays joyously."

After the *hilula*, the couple returned to their home in Casablanca. On their way, a stranger approached them and asked R' Deri, "Do you have money to buy provisions to celebrate the festivals properly?"

"No," he answered. The man took out a sum of one thousand francs from his pocket and handed it to him.

Who was the strange Jew? Only Hashem knows. R' Deri's wife was flabbergasted. She saw the tremendous miracle with her own eyes: the entire sum which they had donated in honor of the *tzaddik* was returned to them. She made peace with her husband. The entire night they sat and discussed the holiness of the *tzaddik zy"a* and how they had received all the money which they needed for the holiday expenses in his merit. In addition, they had given *tzedakah*, for which they would be rewarded eternally.

WORDS OF THE SAGES



The Day of Allotment

"I was in a taxi before Rosh Hashana," tells over Harav Shtein *shlit"a*, "and the driver said to me, 'I don't understand what all the stress and pressure from you rabbanim is about. Throughout the year I was a good Jew, I didn't harm anyone, and most hours of the day I was occupied with my business. I feel I am all set for Rosh Hashana. I have organized a place in the *beit kneset* next to the air-conditioning, and have even bought the fish.'"

"I listened to him," says Rav Shtein, "and I was shaken. There are people who don't understand what Rosh Hashana is all about — to this degree? How every person is judged if he fulfilled the Torah obligations, not to insult another, to guard his eyes, was he particular with the laws of Shabbat etc. He should open the newspaper every day and see that G-d does not rest for a minute. Who doesn't cry when reaching the paragraph in the prayers, 'On Rosh Hashana will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed; how many will pass from this earth and how many will be created...'

"On Rosh Hashana they draw up a list in Heaven and begin to announce: 'Who will enjoy tranquility?' Which person will merit peace and tranquility this year? On the other hand, which person will always be stressed and worried *chas v'shalom*. 'Who will be degraded and who will be exalted?' Who will lose their job or be downgraded and feel humiliated? On the other hand, who will merit a raise and receive a more impressive and important position in his workplace? Which woman will receive consideration and attentiveness from her husband and children and who *chas v'shalom* won't merit this. All this is included! Therefore, writes Rabbi Yisrael Salanter *zt"l*, a person is obligated to beg and plead on Rosh Hashana for every single thing in his life: tranquility, health, success, income, happiness, peace in the home etc."

Rabbi Chaim Friedlander *zt"l* writes in his *sefer Sifsei Chaim* in the name of the holy Ramchal *zy"a*, that on Rosh Hashana Hashem designates a task for each Jewish person in His kingdom for the coming year. For example: *ploni* will merit a year of tranquility so he can continue toiling in Torah undisturbed for many hours. Someone else might merit that this year will find him in good health, without even a slight cold, so he can do *chessed* and help needy people and donate to yeshivot. And *plonit* will have *nachat* from her children and satisfaction from her work so she will be better able to honor her husband, causing the *Shechina* to rest between them.



FROM THE TREASURY

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

Shofar Blowing — When Rosh Hashana Falls on Shabbat

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashana* 29b) cites the following apparent contradiction. In one verse we are told that Rosh Hashana is "a remembrance of shofar blasts" (*Vayikra* 23:24) and in another verse it says "a day of shofar sounding" (*Bamidbar* 29:1). The Gemara explains that one verse refers to Rosh Hashana when it falls on Shabbat and the other verse refers to Rosh Hashana when it falls on a weekday. Since on Shabbat one does not blow the shofar, it is not called "a day of shofar sounding" but only "a remembrance of shofar blasts."

The *sefer Beit Aharon* poses the following difficulty: on Succot, when the *chag* falls on Shabbat, one is forbidden to shake the four species; nevertheless we do not find that on Shabbat of Succot there is special mention of not shaking the lulav. So why when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat do we need to mention "a remembrance of shofar blasts?"

There is a further difficulty. The Targum Yonatan (*Bamidbar* 29:1) writes that the reason we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana is because Satan becomes confused when the shofar is blown and runs away, and cannot succeed in accusing Am Yisrael. The difficulty is, when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat there is still judgment for Am Yisrael! In that case, what will confuse Satan and cause him to flee? How will the accusation be averted?

This could be the reason we mention "a remembrance of the shofar blasts" when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbat. Just mentioning the shofar blasts is enough to confuse Satan and cause him to flee, preventing him from accusing Am Yisrael who stand in judgment before Hashem. The reason why this is so is because Hashem considers a positive intention as an actual deed. We are not blowing the shofar on Shabbat because Hashem has instructed us to only "awaken the remembrance of the blasts" — with these words alone it is considered as though we actually blew the Shofar. That is enough to chase Satan away.

This idea is far-reaching. If just mentioning the mitzvah of blowing shofar has the powerful effect of chasing Satan away, then how much more so when a Jew actually fulfills the mitzvah of blowing the Shofar, does it have the powerful effect of enabling him to grow in his *avodat Hashem*.

שבת (Shabbat) has the same root letters as תשובה (repentance). This implies that the holiness which is present every Shabbat has the power to cleanse us from any residual dirt; it helps us repent sincerely before our Creator. Every Shabbat one leaves behind his weekday occupations and involves himself only in תרועה (shofar sounding) — which can be rewritten as "תורה ע", referring to the Torah which can be explained in seventy (numerical value of the letter ע) ways. The power of occupying oneself with Torah on Shabbat chases Satan away from man, enabling him to elevate and sanctify himself before Hashem.

It is a shame to wait for this opportunity of Rosh Hashana falling on Shabbat which comes every few years (although indeed this year is one of them). We have the ability to utilize the holiness of Torah study every single Shabbat; to sanctify ourselves and grow in Torah and cut ourselves off from the *yetzer hara*.



The Gemara (*Rosh Hashana* 16a) tells us, “The world is judged on four occasions. On Pesach for produce, on Azeret (Shavuot) for fruit, on Chag (Succot) for water. And on Rosh Hashana all mankind pass before Him like members of the flock, as it says, ‘He fashions their hearts all together, He comprehends all their deeds.’” The Gemara asks, “What does ‘like members of the flock’ mean?” The Gemara offers three responses.

The first explanation: “Like the warriors of Bet David” — the soldiers of David Hamelech used to go out to war, each one a skilled expert. So too on Rosh Hashana we pass before Hashem one by one, like those great and important warriors.

The second explanation: “Like the ascent of Bet Choron” — this refers to a high mountain which has a narrow path at its peak, where two people cannot pass at the same time. So too on Rosh Hashana we pass before Hashem one by one.

The third explanation: “Like sheep counted for tithing.” When one tithes sheep, they pass through a narrow door where only one can go through at a time. Nine sheep are counted and then the tenth one is marked with a red line as a sign that he was chosen for *ma’aser*.

Rabbi Shabtai Yudelevitz *zt”l* questions why we need three allegories in order to clarify that each one passes single file; like “soldiers,” like “a steep hill,” and like “counting sheep for *ma’aser*.” Rabbi Shabtai clarifies with a story about a successful merchant who travelled to the market where he invested all his money, including money he had borrowed from friends, in purchasing expensive merchandise. He decided to take the risk of illegally crossing the border to be saved from paying tax on the merchandise, which would considerably increase his profit.

He did not rest until he found a wagon driver who was willing to take him across the border. He arranged every detail of the escape — the travelling would be done at night when there was no light from the moon, and not many

soldiers guarding the border. The appointed night arrived and the merchant loaded the wagon with all his expensive merchandise. Then he and the wagon driver climbed onto the wagon.

Immediately at the start of the journey, the wagon driver noticed the merchant’s hands and legs shaking. The wagon driver mockingly asked him, “Why are you trembling? We have another five hours until we get to our destination, what are you afraid of now when we are still near home?”

The merchant answered him, “How can I not be afraid? If I my plan succeeds I will gain tremendous wealth. My profits will amount to more than ten times the amount that I invested, and from then on I will enjoy the life of a rich and admired person — how wonderful! But if, G-d forbid, towards daylight we meet a soldier at the border who commands us to halt, then the merchandise will be confiscated, I will not see a penny from it, and I will find myself in prison with my creditors hounding my family. Since this is the case, how can I not tremble?”

Meanwhile, they continued on their way. Midnight arrived; they entered the forest and approached the border. It was then that the merchant noticed the wagon driver trembling like a leaf. The merchant asked him:

“Dear wagon driver, why are you so afraid?” The wagon driver answered, “Listen, at the end of the day I am also human; we are getting closer to the riskiest stretch. It is true I do not own any of this merchandise, but the thought of sitting in prison for a month is not a pleasant one; my wagon and horses — which are my livelihood — could be taken from me...”

With wildly beating hearts they continued travelling deeper into the thick forest, following the paths they had prepared in advanced, both trembling... Only the horses didn’t tremble. Horses can’t understand the circumstances, they see no reason to be afraid — a horse remains an animal before the border, at the border and after the border...

“Ay!” Continued the *maggid* Rabbi Shabtai in his famous tune, “This is what the Gemara is hinting to with the three examples. The first one refers to the Jew who at the beginning of Elul begins to tremble; already on Shabbat Mevorchin when “Rosh Chodesh Elul” is announced he starts trembling “like the soldiers of Bet David” who do not join the battalion without practicing first. They invest much energy and extend effort long before the crucial operation.

“And then there is a second type of person whose *yirat Shamayim* stays weak until Rosh Hashana, but once Rosh Hashana arrives he begins to tremble ‘like the ascent of Bet Choron’ because when one walks on a dangerous path with a huge drop on both sides, one walks in single file, in great fear. So too, on the Day of Judgment he is consumed with fear.

“But there is a third type: Jewish people who are compared to quiet sheep joyfully skipping around, who enter the gate and are counted one at a time and do not understand anything. Oy, the tenth sheep does not know the owner marked him with a red line on his back, he will soon be taken to be slaughtered...”

“On Rosh Hashana will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed; how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created; who will live and who will die’ — a mark of life on the back or G-d forbid a red line! Hashem sits on the throne of judgment on Rosh Hashana.

“But the court case did not arrive suddenly, without notice. ‘Like an eagle awakens his nest, over his young he hovers,’ the eagle has mercy on his children and doesn’t scare them by entering the nest unexpectedly, but flies from tree to tree and chirps to his fellow birds in order to arouse his children so they will be prepared to receive his weight. So too, throughout Elul Hashem knocks with the shofar, ‘Wake up sleeping ones from your sleep and those who sleep deeply awakened from your slumber.’ Hashem wishes to rouse us in preparation for Rosh Hashana, when the books of life and death are opened.”



“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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