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maskil Le'David

Faith is Man's Greatest Gift

"Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth"
(Devarim 32:1).

Before Moshe Rabbeinu passed away, he gathered the people and appointed heaven and earth to serve as eternal witnesses. If Bnei Yisrael follow Hashem's path they will be blessed and not lack anything, but if they choose to turn their backs on Hashem and His Torah, they will suffer difficult, harsh decrees and their end will be bitter.

When a will is written it must be signed by witnesses in order to validate its authenticity. Moshe Rabbeinu also appointed two witnesses for his "last will and testament." Why did he not choose the heavenly angels as witnesses? Because not everyone merits seeing angels, and if they cannot be seen, how can they be brought to testify?

If this is the case, we can ask why Moshe did not choose Yehoshua bin Nun, Elazar Hakohen, or the elders? Although human beings eventually pass on, their signatures can be kept and used to testify before Beit Din.

Rashi addresses this question: "Why did he appoint heaven and earth to testify? Moshe said, 'I am a human being and will not live forever. If Bnei Yisrael deny that they accepted the covenant, who will reproach them?' Therefore, he chose heaven and earth, for they are eternal witnesses."

However, heaven and earth are only appropriate witnesses for those who believe in Hashem. When a believing Jew is faced with hardships, he immediately remembers this principle: heaven and earth testified that those who follow the correct path will merit Hashem's blessing, while those who take the path of evil will suffer. But for one who does not believe in Hashem, of what benefit are these witnesses? He does not acknowledge the Creator who created heaven and earth. He

will claim that although heaven and earth can be seen, they have no mouth to attest to Hashem's existence. So how do we refute this claim?

"The heavens declare the glory of G-d, and the firmament tells of His handiwork" (*Tehillim* 19:2). If one wishes to believe in the Creator, it is enough to look at the heavens which declare Hashem's glory, and contemplate the firmament which tells of His handiwork. Even though they cannot talk, just contemplating the heavens strengthens one's faith in the Creator Who fashioned them during the six days of Creation. Their very existence validates and verifies the Creator.

A heretic who refuses to acknowledge Hashem's existence and detaches himself from the light of Torah will remain blind even if we bring him all the proofs and evidence in the world of Hashem's existence. Until he agrees to open his eyes, no form of reasoning will be of any benefit. Therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu said to Bnei Yisrael, "I appoint to bear witness against you" — it is dependent on *you* and *your* will.

Every object and creature will eventually decompose and perish. A person buys a suit and wears it for a year, two years, even ten years, but even after the longest time, the suit will eventually wear out and no longer be fit for use. A tree may be sturdy and have strong roots, but the day will come when its roots will rot and the tree will decay. Sand too flies around in the wind and does not remain firmly in place. Even man, the crown of creation, is given a limited amount of time in this world and after a hundred and twenty years will die. Only the heaven and earth stand set for eternity, and that is why Moshe chose them to bear witness to his warning.

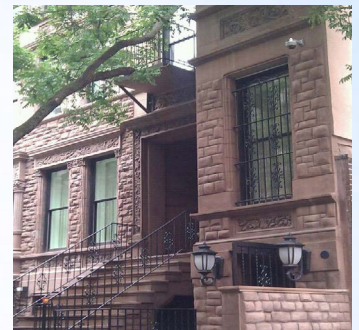
I have come across many people who nod their heads in agreement when I speak to them about Judaism and mitzvah observance, but the truth is their hearts are somewhere else. Only when I begin speaking about their business concerns do their heads begin to work and their brains go into over-drive. These people are blind and do not consider what awaits them after their death. When the day comes for them to leave This World, how sorry they will be. They will be ashamed of their foolishness but it will be way too late.

cont. p. 2.>>>

8 Tishrei 5787
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Ha'azinu



Hilula

8 Tishrei
Rabbi Avner Yisrael
Hatzarfati, Av Beit Din Pass

9 Tishrei
Rabbi Yitzchak Zev
Soloveitchik of Brisk

10 Tishrei
Rabbi David Knafo,
Av Beit Din Mogador

11 Tishrei
Rabbi Shlomo Bochbot

12 Tishrei
Rabbi Yechiel Michel
of Zvhil

13 Tishrei
Rabbi Shaul Adadi

14 Tishrei
Rabbi Yosef Tzvi
Dushinsky





WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Free Favors

A man once disgraced my name in public in a most offensive way. The day came when he met with misfortune. His business collapsed and whatever he tried his hand at failed. He needed my assistance to pull himself out of the depths of distress, and for various reasons I was the only one who was able to help him. Indeed, I helped him tremendously until he was able to stand on his own two feet once again. I even came to his new home and affixed the mezuzah to his doorpost, blessing him with all things good. I also presented his family with a respectable gift in honor of their new home — a picture of my grandfather the *tzaddik*, Rabbi Chaim Pinto *zy"a*.

The man and his wife were awestruck by my unconditional generosity. They couldn't stop thanking me, especially after the way I had been treated. However, I harbored no resentment whatsoever in my heart.

They thanked me repeatedly, with tears in their eyes. They offered to pay for all my help, but I politely declined their offer. I did not want to receive monetary payment for my gestures.

Once again they were overcome with emotion — but these were tears of repentance. Today, they are completely Torah-observant and keep all the mitzvot like any other observant Jew.

When asked why I had refused their offer of payment, I replied that had I taken money, they would have considered it atonement for the *lashon hara* they had spoken about me, and would never have repented. But when I refused their offer, they understood that they had to do specific teshuva for that sin regardless of the favors I had done for them. In this way, they merited doing complete teshuva.

cont. from p. 1 >>>

When the king parades in the streets, the entire population goes outside to greet him. If someone decides it does not interest him and remains at home instead of going out to greet the king, he will later be very sorry when he hears the king distributed generous gifts to all who welcomed him. To one he gave a house, another received a vineyard, and someone else precious stones and pearls. But the one who remained at home did not get a thing. Later, when he decides to go out and greet the king so he can also receive a gift, he finds the king has already returned to his palace. He missed the opportunity.

So too, when man locks himself up and does not want to believe in Hashem, he is the one who loses out enormously — because faith is one of the greatest gifts man can possess.



FROM THE TREASURY

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

Hashem Rejoices with His lot

“For Hashem’s portion is His people; Yaakov is the measure of His inheritance” (Devarim 32:9).

Tana d’bei Eliyahu tells us that one of Hashem’s attributes is “happy with His lot.” The *gaon* Rabbi Chaim Volozhin *zt”l* (*Nefesh Hachaim*) asks: Does not the entire world belong to Hashem? He is the One Who rules over everything and there is no area which His presence does not fill. So how is it possible to say that Hashem is “happy with His lot?”

The Vilna Gaon answers that “His lot” refers to Am Yisrael, as it says, “For Hashem’s portion is His people; Yaakov is the measure of His inheritance.” Hashem is happy with His portion, happy with Am Yisrael whatever their situation, even in generations where they have fallen from their spiritual greatness.

With *siyata d’Shmaya* I would like to add that the main joy and pleasure Hashem has from His people is when they repent and return to Him. When Am Yisrael turn their backs on Hashem *r”l*, distancing themselves from His Torah and mitzvot, there is no doubt this causes the holy *Shechina* terrible pain. This can be compared to a prince who alienated himself from his father and left his palace. So Hashem laments, “Woe to Me that My children have exiled themselves from My table and left Me.”

As soon as Am Yisrael arouse themselves to return to their Father in Heaven and re-connect to His Torah and mitzvot, there is no limit to the joy and pleasure this brings to Hashem. His lost children, the delight of His soul, are returning to Him and wish to bask in His presence and live together with Him. When Hashem sees His children returning to Him, He grants them a precious gift to express His love for them. Hashem restores the purity of their souls which they lost when they distanced themselves from Him. Now Hashem willingly returns the jewel that was taken from them.

If a human king wishes to present his servant with an expensive gift but for some reason the servant refuses to accept it, the king will clearly be very angry at this scornful act and the servant will pay for it dearly. So it is with the King of kings. The *yetzer hara* incites man to sin, causing him to blemish his ways, turn his back on the Creator, and distance himself from Him. But with His abundant mercy, not only is Hashem patient and does not punish him straight away, He even calls him to repent and once again cleave to Hashem and His Torah.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

How Does One Preserve the Atmosphere of the High Holy Days?

We are enveloped by the holy Yom Kippur atmosphere, being compared to Heavenly angels. The question is, how, if at all, can one preserve that atmosphere, eternalizing those lofty moments and holding on to them throughout the coming year?

Most likely during these holy moments we each accepted upon ourselves some positive commitment as a merit to emerge worthy from the Heavenly trial. Again the question arises, what can we do so the untainted scent of that undertaking should not fade away? How can we maintain this sincerity during the course of the year?

The solution is to fix a special time for the daily study of *mussar*. Studying *mussar* can be compared to a mirror found in every home, in almost every room. We stand in front of it, make adjustments to our clothing, etc., and once the mirror approves we are prepared to leave the house.

This is how we should view the study of *mussar*. It reveals to us all of our negative traits, all the tactics of the *yetzer hara*, and teaches us how the power of imagination can lead us astray. Studying *mussar* enables us to rectify our *middot* and improve our ways, and only then are we ready to appear in public and mix with others in a way that will testify that we are faithful Jews.

The Chafetz Chaim *zt"l* writes about the importance of a daily *mussar* session:

"The holy *sefarim*, for example the Arizal and the Vilna Gaon's *zt"l* commentary on *Mishlei*, strongly emphasize the obligation of studying *mussar* daily. Particularly in our times, due to our many sins, when we see a great increase in violators of religion and disseminators of erroneous beliefs, it is extremely important to reinforce the study of *mussar*, for this is the only way we can prevail and not be overcome.

"To what can this be compared? To someone walking on his way who is suddenly faced with a strong wind. If he does not hold on tightly to his clothes, the storm can strip him of all his clothes leaving him naked. So too concerning this matter: Now, when a stormy wind of heresy and apostasy is raging in the world, if a person does not strengthen his *mussar* study — the garment that protects his Torah — he will be chased by the wind."



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Prayer that Pierces the Heavens

"See, now, that I, I am He — and no god is with Me" (*Devarim* 32:39).

The *Megaleh Amukot* explains that there are nine hundred and fifty-five heavens. Nine hundred of the heavens are where the lofty angels can be found, but the highest fifty-five are Hashem's dominion alone and no angel may step into this territory. The words of the verse "Behold! To Hashem, your G-d, are the heaven and the highest heaven" (*Devarim* 10:14) hint to this idea. The numerical value of "*hen* – behold" is fifty-five; these heavens are for Hashem alone.

Moshe Rabbeinu pierced all the heavens through his prayers. With what did he pierce them? With the nine hundred verses of *sefer Devarim*. And from the verse "See, now" until the end of the Torah, there are fifty-five verses.

Therefore, when Moshe pierced the nine hundred heavens with the nine hundred verses of *sefer Devarim*, he saw the angels, Seraphim, and Ofanim in these heavens. But when he recited this verse and pierced the first of the remaining fifty-five heavens where no angels reside, then Moshe said, "See, now, that I, I am He and no god is with Me."

The Final Redemption Will Bring Complete Recovery

"I struck down and I will heal" (*Devarim* 32:39).

The *Zohar Hakadosh* quotes Rabbi Yosi: "In the future Hashem will perfect and heal Am Yisrael so they will be entirely perfect and have no defects among them, because they are the rectification of the world, comparable to man's clothing which is the rectification for his body. This is the meaning of the verse (*Iyov* 38:14), 'As [people] come into being like [the earth's] garment'."

"Come and see; at the resurrection of the dead, they will arise just as they entered [the grave]. If they entered lame or blind, lame and blind they will arise, in the same form, so people should not say, 'This resurrected person is someone else.'"

"Only after that will Hashem heal them and they will stand perfect before Him, and then the whole world will reach perfection, as it says, 'On that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.'"

The Gravesite of Moshe Rabbeinu

"From a distance shall you see the Land" (*Devarim* 32:52).

We know that Moshe Rabbeinu was buried in the portion of Gad, as it says in Gad's blessing, "For that is where the lawgiver's plot is hidden" (*Devarim* 33:21).

In his commentary *Od Yosef Chai*, Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim *zy"a* writes a wonderful hint for this: If you split the word "*mineged* — from a distance" into two, it can be read "*min gad* — from Gad."

So the verse can be translated, "From Gad shall you see the Land" — from your burial place in the portion of Gad, you will be able to see Eretz Yisrael.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



How Does One fulfil the Mitzvah of Rejoicing on the Chag?

The mitzvah incumbent upon us during the approaching Chag of Succot is "You shall rejoice on your festival... and you will be completely joyous." We know Hashem does not obligate a person with something he is incapable of carrying out, so how can Hashem command us to feel unlimited joy, without any distress or concerns? Surely our Father who sees into our hearts knows this is extremely difficult for us.

Hagaon Rabbi Chaim HaKohen zt"l, the Chalbani, answers this question by asking another question: On Succot, in the blessing recited after eating *mezonot* foods we say, "And gladden us Hashem, our G-d, on this day of the Festival of Succot." However, if Hashem commands us to rejoice and it seems to be a mitzvah we must carry out, why do we ask Hashem to make us happy? Hashem said, "You shall rejoice on your festival," and we say to Him, "And gladden us Hashem, our G-d?"

This, in fact, is the profundity of feeling joyful. It is not a mitzvah a person can fulfil by himself for it is very hard. In contrast to *lulav* and *succah*, where man himself can go and buy the necessary articles, when commanded to be completely happy on the festivals, he may see this as a challenge. One's many concerns and limitations make it very difficult for him. So he picks up his eyes towards heaven and begs Hashem, "Master of the World, I truly want to fulfil Your command with all my heart and feel unlimited joy, but this is an extremely challenging directive. Although I am happy, You want me to be boundlessly joyful, without feeling any sorrow or restrictions at all!"

And then we get a glimpse of the answer; a powerful profundity that is the basis of this mitzvah: We are truly not capable of fulfilling this mitzvah on our own! So we turn to Hashem and ask Him to make us happy, "And gladden us Hashem, our G-d, on this day of the Festival of Succot." Meaning, we understand very well that we do not possess the power to do anything at all – everything is from Him.

When a person comprehends that it is Hashem Who does everything, his heart is filled with great

joy. For the essence of joy stems from closeness to Hashem, realizing that Hashem is very close to us and there is no limit to Hashem's love for us and no end to His assistance. There is no limit to the joy of one who attains this perception of G-dliness and understands the depth of Hashem's closeness to His people. It fills us with confidence and courage.

This teaches us that it is our attachment to Hashem that lies behind the joy we must feel on the Chag. This comes specifically from understanding that we ourselves do nothing. When we wish to fulfil the mitzvah of rejoicing on the Chag and feel it is too hard for us, we turn to Hashem and ask for His help, with the realization that He is the Only One who does everything and there is none other than Him. We then recognize the depth of Hashem's closeness to us which fills us with tremendous joy. Because it is Hashem who gladdens us and we rejoice in His closeness.

You Give Color to Life!

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the fact that our demanding lifestyles are replete with challenges, disappointments, and various failures. Yet despite all this we are commanded to forget about everything and be happy. How do we do this?

Harav Aharon Margalit *shlit"a* stresses: **Man does not choose his life's picture. What he does choose is how to color it. He can choose whether to laugh or cry, complain or rejoice. Everything depends on his choice. We must remember that the picture of our lives is drawn by Hashem and is not in our control, but we can choose the colors.**

What is our life's picture? The challenges presented to us by Hashem. He did not ask us if we want this father or that mother, which blood type we would like, who we choose to be our brothers and sisters. He determined our reality and we are the ones who decide how to work with it.

So long as a person does not come to terms with

this reality, he does not possess the humility and submission necessary to understand it is all Hashem's doing. He is the One who put me here and these are the challenges Hashem, in His glory, decided to set in my path. Lacking this perception make it very hard to cope with one's circumstances.

"Hashem gave and gives each person the exact strengths he needs to face his personal challenges and complete his mission in This World," continues Harav Margalit. "As David Hamelech said, 'He Who gives snow like fleece, He scatters frost like ashes.' Before descending to this lowly world, each person receives from Hashem all the strength required of him in his lifetime to cope with the challenges he will face. And then, in the moment of truth, when he is faced with a challenge, if he has the sense, he makes use of those strengths.

"And if Hashem specifically chose us and specifically gave us a difficult challenge, it is a sign that we are capable of handling it. Not everyone is capable, but we are capable of overcoming our tailor-made challenge. How can we know this? From the fact that Hashem is testing precisely us! He does not test someone who is truly not capable!

"When a person realizes this reality and understands that everything depends on his attitude and perspective, his life changes drastically in an instant. Up until now he tried to fight reality but was unsuccessful. It turned him into an angry, hurt, and bitter person, who judged everything negatively. This kind of person lacks hope, he is a hopeless pessimist who spreads poison in his surroundings and is unpleasant to be around.

"But when he comes to terms with reality and understands Who is behind it, his life changes drastically! He begins to handle his challenges in a healthy way, with faith in the Creator and recognition of the strengths given to him to overcome the difficulty and surpass the challenge."



"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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