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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 Aharon Pinto** zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi **Chaim Pinto** zy"ta

maskil Le'David

Torah Saves Us from Harmful Spirits

"You shall observe the month of springtime and perform the Pesach-offering for Hashem, your G-d, for in the month of springtime Hashem, your G-d, took you out of Egypt at night" (Devarim 16:1).

Rashi asks, "Did they not leave by day (and not at night)? Indeed, they left by day, but Pharaoh gave them permission to leave the night before as it says, 'He called to Moshe and Aharon at night and said, 'Rise up, go out from among my people'" (*Shemot* 12:31, *Sifri*).

This Midrash is perplexing. Did Bnei Yisrael leave Mitzrayim because Pharaoh gave them permission to do so? Hashem smote Pharaoh and his people with powerful plagues, proving to them His great power and outstretched arm, and that He is the only Ruler and exclusive Power over the entire order of creation. With the last plague of the firstborns, Pharaoh feared for his life for he too was a firstborn. Therefore he immediately, against his will and not out of the goodness of his heart, agreed to release Bnei Yisrael from under his jurisdiction. The question is, is that called "giving permission?" And was Bnei Yisrael's redemption dependent on his good will?

In general, why was it necessary for Pharaoh to give them permission to leave his land? Was not the entire redemption from Egypt accompanied by miracles, wonders, and signs? Would Bnei Yisrael really have been unable to leave without Pharaoh's permission?

In order to answer these questions, we will take a look at the beginning of the *parsha* where we are told, "See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse" (*Devarim* 11:26). Why does the verse use the expression "see" — is it possible to tangibly see a blessing and a curse?

With *siyata d'Shmaya*, I would like to suggest an answer. Moshe Rabbeinu was telling Bnei Yisrael to look and gaze at *him*, "ראה אנכי" ("See - me"). They

should observe him and see the immense levels that one who cleaves to the Holy Torah is capable of achieving.

Moshe Rabbeinu merited speaking with the Holy Shechina face to face; he went up to the Heavens and remained in the presence of angels for forty days and nights. He achieved the height of spiritual levels, all in the merit of occupying himself with the Holy Torah and fulfilling Hashem's every wish. If so, it is worthwhile for Bnei Yisrael too, to follow this path and cleave to Hashem Yitbarach and His Holy Torah.

This is also one of the reasons why the Holy Torah allows us to eat certain foods while other foods are forbidden. It also tests us: are we indeed faithful servants to our Master? Are we prepared to obey His mitzvot and fulfill His Will wholeheartedly? Among other things, this is expressed when a person is tested with a certain food forbidden by the Torah. If he craves this food, but immediately withdraws and does not consume it, he proves his faithfulness to the Creator. Hashem is then praised through him, and He declares, "You are My servant, Israel, in whom I take glory" (*Yeshaya* 49:3). Through this he merits all the blessings in the Torah.

Now we can understand why Bnei Yisrael required Pharaoh's permission to leave Mitzrayim: they did not yet possess the power of Torah. Am Yisrael in Mitzrayim were weak and void of Torah and mitzvot. The absence of the power of Torah placed them under the control of Pharaoh — Pharaoh symbolizes spiritual impurity. This is why they required his permission to leave. This distressed the Creator; despite all the wonders and signs He performed in Mitzrayim, Bnei Yisrael required the wicked Pharaoh's consent.

This is the implication of the verse (*Devarim* 16:1), "You shall observe the month of springtime...for in the month of springtime Hashem, your G-d, took you out of Egypt at night." Night is a time of darkness and obscurity. Moshe was telling Bnei Yisrael to remember their time in Egypt; they were steeped in spiritual darkness, without the light of Torah and mitzvot. Pharaoh's impurity controlled them and his consent was required in order for them to leave, for the only power that can subdue spiritual impurity is the power of the Holy Torah. In the absence of Torah, a person is overruled by forces of evil that raise their heads and are able to defeat him.

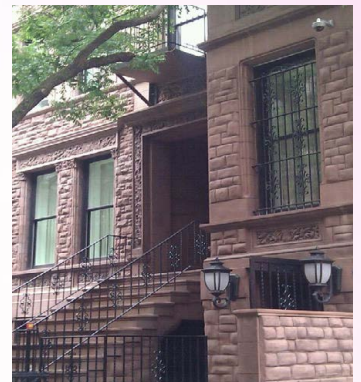
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29 Av 5785

23 August 2025

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Re'eh



Hilula

29 Av

Rabbi Yaakov Bardugo,
author of *Shufreha D'Yaakov*

30 Av

Rabbi Yehuda Lavi,
Rav of Tripoli

1 Eloul

Rabbi Shmuel de Abila

2 Eloul

Rabbi Aharon Chason

3 Eloul

Rabbi Eliyahu Mansani,
a student of the Holy
Ohr HaChaim

4 Eloul

Rabbi Meir Simcha
Hakohen, the *Or Same'ach*

5 Eloul

The esteemed Rabbi Moshe
Aharon Pinto zy"ta





FROM THE TREASURY

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

A Fixed Place for Prayer

“Rather, only in the place that Hashem will choose, among one of your tribes, there shall you bring up your burnt-offerings” (*Devarim* 12:14).

Why is the Beit Hamikdash referred to as “מקום” — “the place”? Why does the Torah not call it by its explicit name?

I would like to suggest that the Beit Hamikdash the Torah is referring to is not only the Beit Hamikdash situated on Har Hamoria, but also the private Beit Hamikdash dwelling inside each person's heart. A Jew's body is considered a miniature Beit Hamikdash and dwelling place for Hashem, as it says (*Shemot* 25:8), “They shall make a Sanctuary for Me – so that I may dwell among them.” Chazal expound, saying “among them” and not “among it” implies that Hashem dwells inside each and every person. Therefore, everyone must cleanse their hearts and dedicate themselves so their bodies become suitable receptacles for the Shechina's presence.

This is why the Beit Hamikdash is referred to as “makom” — “place.” “Place” refers to man; wherever man may be, that is his place. That very place becomes elevated and significant through man's spiritual powers. The more he elevates himself and spiritually sanctifies himself, the more his “place” is transformed into one of holiness, in line with the Chazal that it is not a person's place which honors him, but a person who honors his place.

It follows that the entire service in the Beit Hamikdash was an allusion to man's personal service. This is why the Torah commands that just as all services in the Mikdash were limited to one permanent particular place, so one should have a fixed place for one's prayers, as Chazal say (*Berachot* 6:2), “Anyone who fixes a place for his prayers, the G-d of Avraham assists him.” When someone chooses a specific location for their prayers instead of praying casually wherever they happen to be, it demonstrates how significant and valuable they regard prayer to be.

Today, due to our many sins we do not have a Beit Hamikdash or the service of the *korbanot*. Prayer in a set place has taken the place of *korbanot* which were offered in a set place in the Mikdash. This sense of permanence should be a fundamental principle in our devotion to Hashem. An individual must remain steadfast in adhering to the genuine path throughout their lifetime.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Delivering the Goods

I once went to pray at the gravesites of the *tzaddikim* in Marrakesh, Morocco, including the tomb of the *tzaddik*, Rabbi Shlomo Timsut *zy”a*.

When I read the name of the *tzaddik* imprinted on the grave, I suddenly remembered my friend from Paris who bears the same name. I decided to call him and tell him I would pray for him. If he had any type of problem or challenge, the *zechut* of the *tzaddik* would stand on his behalf and, *b'ezrat Hashem*, his difficulties would be resolved. Unfortunately, my friend did not answer the phone; I left him a message.

The next day, he returned my call. With apparent excitement, he declared, “Honored Rav, when you called me yesterday, I was in the midst of an important

meeting with a big supplier who was advised by his lawyer to cease sending me merchandise. Needless to say, I stood to lose a sizeable income. Suddenly, this supplier's manager walked into the room unannounced and ordered him to halt any debate regarding cancellation of our contract. Instead, the supplier was instructed to renew my contract and even double the supply. There was no logical reason for this.

“Honorable Rav, after hearing your message that you would pray for me, I had no doubt where my salvation came from. It was the merit of your prayers at the grave of the *tzaddik* that stood in my defense on High which saved me from suffering a tremendous loss.”

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This serves as a lesson for Bnei Yisrael: it is advisable for them to cleave to Hashem Yitbarach and His Holy Torah and fulfill His Will, for only the Torah can protect them against spiritual and physical enemies which incriminate them. The Torah saves and protects, and it is the power of Torah that brings blessing upon man.

He who occupies himself with Torah and fulfills Hashem's mitzvot is also saved from poverty and will experience Hashem's blessing, as it says (*ibid* 15:4), “However, may there be no destitute among you; rather, Hashem will surely bless you.” Rashi asks: later on it says, “For destitute people will not cease to exist within the Land” (*ibid* 11). How does one reconcile these two

verses? Rashi answers that the promise of complete blessing is conditional on the observance of the commandments: if the nation keeps the Torah, poverty will exist only among the other nations and not within Am Yisroel. But if they forsake the Torah, there will indeed be poverty among them.

This demonstrates that the assurance “it is the blessing of Hashem that enriches” (*Mishlei* 10:22), is only valid when one performs His Will and fulfills His mitzvot, for then the external adversaries have no control over us and we are placed under the protection and Divine Intervention of Hashem Yitbarach Who protects us from all evil calamities.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Kollel Avreichim are Maintaining Your Business!

The Maggid Rabbi Shlomo Levenstein *shlit"a* relates a story he heard from the Gitler brothers who own the book store, Ha'Achim Gitler. The store has two branches, one in Bnei Brak and the other in Jerusalem. The Bnei Brak branch is more profitable than the Jerusalem one, seemingly due to its popular location.

At a certain point, the brothers were thinking about moving the Jerusalem store to Malchei Yisrael Street, a main thoroughfare in the Geula neighborhood of Jerusalem. After considering the matter they concluded that this might harm other book stores in the neighborhood and cause unfair competition. On the other hand, leaving the store in its less-than-optimal location was not a profitable option. They were unsure about what to do.

The brothers decided to go to Maran Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman *zt"l* for his advice. They detailed the pros and cons of the proposed move, including an additional point. The present location allows them to support the families of three *avreichim*, whose wives work in the store. Since the store does not generate a loss, the brothers thought maybe it is appropriate to stay in this location, so as not to deprive these families of a steady income.

When they presented this consideration to Rav Shteinman, the Gaon quickly retorted in surprise, "Who told you that *you* are supporting *them*? Maybe *they* are supporting *you*?" And then he added, "You cannot know — maybe the reason for the success in Bnei Brak is because it is a source of livelihood for three wives of *avreichim* in Yerushalayim!"



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Rebuke — Not Dependent on the Number of Listeners

"See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse" (*Devarim* 11:26).

"Even if one offers rebuke knowing that only one person out of all who are listening will take his words to heart," says Rabbi Chaim of Worms, "he should not hold back from admonishing the public — as we find with Moshe Rabbeinu. In the verse quoted above Moshe says, 'I present before *you*,' in the plural, while the word 'see' is in the singular.

"Although Moshe was addressing the entire Am Yisrael, his words were directed to each individual, to whom he said 'see.'"

Your Student is the King's Son!

"You are children to Hashem, your G-d" (*Devarim* 14:1).

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman *zt"l*, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr Yisrael, related the following story:

"One Shabbat, I went to visit my master and teacher, Harav Moshe Rosenstein *zt"l*, the Mashgiach of the Lomza Yeshiva, and saw he was testing a young child in Chumash. I asked him, 'Who is this child?' and he whispered in my ear, 'He is Hashem's child!'

"Realizing that I was surprised by his answer, he explained: 'Had I said he is Chaim's child, you would then have some impression of who he is. By telling you he is Hashem's child, does it not give you an impression of who the child really is?'"

"This must be the approach of one who educates Jewish children: he is educating the children of the King of Kings! It says, 'You are children to Hashem your G-d' — not merely that he is teaching Chaim's or Aharon's child. Just as we must fulfill 'I have set Hashem before me always,' so too when teaching another child, we must remember that the Father of this child is Hashem! This perspective is what will give the teacher the patience needed for his students, allowing him to approach them in an entirely different manner."

The Relationship and Closeness Justify Becoming Impure

"You are children to Hashem, your G-d, you shall not cut yourselves and you shall not make a bald spot between your eyes for a dead person" (*Devarim* 14:1).

Rabbi David ben Moyal *zt"l*, in his *sefer Kuntrus Zichron Devarim*, explains the connection between each part of the pasuk: "You are children to Hashem", "You shall not cut yourselves" (the prohibition to cut one's skin), and "You shall not make a bald spot between your eyes for a dead person" (the prohibition of plucking one's hair out of grief and bereavement).

He quotes Rabbi Yehuda Rozanis, who wrote in his *sefer Parshat Derachim* as follows: Yisrael are considered as Hashem's children; if not, how will Hashem resurrect the dead in the future since the Gemara tells us (*Sanhedrin* 39a) He — Hashem — is a Kohen? The Mishna tells us, "Beloved are the people of Israel, for they are described as children of the Omnipresent" (*Avot* 3:14). Hashem can therefore become impure for us, His children, just as a Kohen may become impure for his seven closest relatives.

Now we can understand the flow of the verse. "You are children to Hashem" — Hashem can become impure for you in order to bring you back to life during the future resurrection of the dead, and this is why "You shall not cut yourselves and you shall not make a bald spot...for a dead person" — death is only a temporary state and not something absolute.

a NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Our Responsibility as Hashem's Children



“To fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days”
(*Devarim* 14:23).

In an inspirational talk where Maran Rabbi Ahron Leib Shteinman *zt”l*, addressed dozens of businessmen from America who had come to Eretz Yisrael for a short time to study Torah and strengthen themselves spiritually, he quoted the famous *mashal* brought by the *Nefesh Hachaim*. A king had two guards; one was responsible for guarding the royal crown, while the other one was responsible for the stables. Of course, the guardian of the royal crown is entrusted with the enormous responsibility of ensuring that there should not be a single scratch in the crown. Just as his responsibility is much greater than the one who guards the stables, so too we are entrusted with the special role of increasing the honor of Heaven through all our ways and deeds.

On this topic, there is an astonishing story, written in *Matok Midvash* by Rav Yitzchak Parchi, about Rabbi Moshe Galantai *zt”l*. Rabbi Moshe served as the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and was famous for his righteousness and piety, besides for his ingenuity and expertise in the seven wisdoms: the wisdoms of logic, mathematics, measures, nature, traits, melody and Divinity. There was none as outstanding as him in his entire generation!

However, there was at that time an Arab Sheikh who was also proficient in the seven wisdoms. In addition, if someone fell ill, the family would request of the Sheikh to pray for the sick relative's recovery. The Sheikh would seclude himself for some time, and then determine, “He shall live,” or “He shall die.” His prediction was always correct, just as we are told, *lehavdil*, about Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa.

When Rabbi Moshe heard about this, he asked in surprise, “How can it be that the Books of the Living and the Books of the Dead were revealed to this *goy*, and that even Jews seek his advice?”

The Rav went to the Sheikh's house and was received with great honor. They sat down and the Sheikh said to the rav, “I heard that you are a very clever man. Are you familiar with the wisdom of logic?”

The rav replied that indeed Hashem had blessed him with a small measure of this wisdom. The Sheikh began asking him various questions and quickly realized that his knowledge of logic was negligible in comparison to the rav's.

He asked the Rav to share his wisdom with him, and they studied together until the hour grew late.

The next day the Sheikh yearned to acquire the wisdom of mathematics, and sent his carriage to bring the rav to his castle. They debated in this wisdom and once again the Sheikh realized the vastness of the rav's wisdom. This continued for a number of days, with Rabbi Moshe enhancing the Sheikh's grasp of the other wisdoms of the world.

Eventually the Sheikh asked, “Are you knowledgeable in the seventh wisdom, the wisdom of Divinity?”

“Praised is G-d, I am somewhat well-versed in that wisdom,” Rabbi Moshe Galanti replied.

“Please teach me this wisdom until its completion,” requested the Sheikh.

“This wisdom cost me dearly,” replied the rav, “therefore I cannot impart it free of charge.”

“Please tell me your fee. I am ready to pay whatever you desire.”

“Far be it from me to sell this wisdom in exchange for money,” said the rav, “I am only willing to teach it in exchange for a different wisdom. When praying for the sick, you are able to discern whether they will live or die. If you teach me this wisdom, I will teach you the Divine wisdom.”

“You are challenging me with something most difficult,” the Sheikh replied gloomily. “This is something that I cannot reveal to any human being.”

“If so,” Rabbi Moshe Galanti concluded, “I too cannot reveal to you the seventh wisdom!”

“My ancestors made me swear that I will not reveal this knowledge for all the wealth in the world,” the Sheikh explained.

“You are not selling it for money,” Rabbi Moshe Galanti justified himself. “Rather you are exchanging it for a different wisdom. This was not part of your ancestors' condition.”

The Rav kept on entreating the Sheikh who eventually agreed. “Listen well,” the Sheikh instructed. “Go home and accept upon yourself to abstain from food for two days. In the meal preceding the fast, do not eat meat or drink wine. During these two days immerse yourself in ritual waters morning and evening.”

“I will do as you say,” promised the rav.

“Go in peace,” said the Sheikh, “and on the third day I will reveal to you the awesome secret.”

Rabbi Moshe Galanti went home and fasted for three days. On the third morning after completing his prayers, he hurried over to the Sheikh's home.

After immersing themselves, the Sheikh took Rav Moshe to a palatial home that was surrounded by a silver gate engraved with emblems. The Sheikh took out a silver key from his pocket and warned the rav, “Take care to enter with appropriate awe, just as I will do.”

He opened the door, revealing a magnificent hall. On the facing wall hung an embroidered curtain, set with precious stones and pearls. The Sheikh entered with awe and bowed down seven times facing the curtain.

The rav was very afraid that the curtain might be hiding *avodah zara*. The Sheikh turned to him and in a low voice said, “Approach the temple, move aside the curtain and you will find what you are seeking!”

The Rav approached, moved the curtain aside and his eyes beheld golden doors studded with diamonds. He opened the doors and came face to face with a breathtaking golden tablet, on which the form of the Menorah was carved. Above the Menorah were engraved the words “I have set Hashem before me always.” The letters of Hashem's Name were larger than the rest of the verse.

The Sheikh gazed at Rabbi Moshe standing there in astonishment, and in a shaking voice told him, “You should know, Rabbi of the Jews, that these larger letters spell the Name of the Omnipotent, Who created the world from nothing and sustains it to this very day.” The Sheikh thought he was revealing a secret unknown to the Jews.

“Furthermore, you should know that when someone asks me to pray for a sick person, I immerse myself and then approach this temple with fear and pray in front of it. At the conclusion of my prayers, I move the curtain aside and open the doors. If I see that above the golden Menorah the letters of the Name of G-d are illuminated, I know that the sick person will recover. However, if they are extinguished, it is a sign that he will die.”

The Rav returned home and sobbed from the depths of his broken heart.

“Woe to us from the day of judgement! This non-Jew is aware that these letters form the Name of G-d, honors Him so greatly, and approaches Him with such fear. From this he merited fame and honor. We, who are children of Hashem and call His Name, must conduct ourselves accordingly and tremble before Him, especially when mentioning His Great Name! What rewards might we gain if we truly experienced this level of awe for the sanctity of His Name and revered Him as we should?”