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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

Taking the Youngsters and Elderly to the Wilderness

"So Moshe and Aharon were returned to Pharaoh and he said to them, 'Go and serve Hashem, your G-d; which ones are going?' Moshe said, 'With our youngsters and with our elders shall we go; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flock and with our cattle shall we go, because it is a festival of Hashem for us'" (Shemot 10:8-9).

Maran Hagaon Rabbi Yeshayahu Pinto zy"ta (the Rif) explains the dispute between Pharaoh and Moshe, where Pharaoh asked, "Which ones are going?" Pharaoh agreed to let Moshe Rabbeinu go serve Hashem, on condition that Moshe and Aharon take with them only those who "are going." This refers to those who go willingly. The youngsters and elderly might not all want to go: Children do not have an understanding of bringing sacrifices, and the elderly find travelling difficult.

What was Moshe's answer? "The youngsters and elderly will also join us." He explained, "It is a festival of Hashem for us," meaning: just like on a Chag we are commanded "You shall rejoice on your festival; you, your son, your daughter" (*Devarim* 16:14). Even though the children are not obligated to observe the mitzvot we share our rejoicing with them. So too it is necessary for everyone to join us in the Wilderness, the youngsters and the elderly too.

I would like to explain Rabbi Yeshayahu's holy words. In fact, it was necessary for the youngsters to join Moshe and Aharon. The youngsters indeed had no desire to leave Egypt for the Wilderness. They became accustomed to dwelling in a materialistic, impure land, as it says in reference to Egypt (*Bereishit* 42:9), "The land's nakedness," nakedness being an expression of impurity.

Since the plague of Blood, the Jewish people had become wealthy, because only by purchasing water from the Jews did the Egyptians have water to drink which had not turned to blood (*Shemot Rabba* 9:10). All this wealth had an effect on the youngsters; why

would they want to leave their new found luxuries for the Wilderness?

But Moshe explained why taking them out of Egypt to the Wilderness, a place lacking anything of material substance, would bring them to love Torah and wish to study it, just as David Hamelech says, "Taste and see that it is good" (*Tehillim* 34:9). Because once they taste the sweetness of Torah they will no longer be able to detach themselves from it, and they will then fulfil the verse, "Because it is a festival of Hashem for us" — the Torah will be considered as a festival for them.

This is a concept in Jewish education which Moshe wished to instil in the Jewish people, the proper way to raise youngsters to appreciate the Torah.

Pharaoh replied to Moshe and Aharon, "So be Hashem with you as I will send you forth with your children! Look, the evil intent is opposite your faces" (*Shemot* 10:10). What is the meaning of Pharaoh's response?

It seems Pharaoh was telling Moshe that since the children might not want the Torah or rejoice with it, it is a shame to take them out of Egypt. Maybe the children will consider the Torah as "evil," G-d forbid. But Moshe did not accept Pharaoh's words because, as we explained, although the Torah may seem like something negative to those starting out, as soon they taste it they will not wish to withdraw from it.

We will now explain why Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to take the animals too. He wished to inculcate in the children that sheep are not *avodah zarah*, as the Egyptians considered them to be. Pharaoh answered him, "Look, the evil intent is opposite your faces," and *Chazal* explain that he was referring to the sin of the Golden Calf. Pharaoh wanted to show Moshe what will result from the flock — the sin of the calf.

Pharaoh also added, "Not so; let the men go now. Serve Hashem, for that is what you seek!" (*Shemot* 10:11).

Pharaoh sent for Moshe and Aharon because his servants said to him, "Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" They pressured him to send for them and thus save the land. He agreed and again called Moshe and Aharon. He argued with Moshe and tried to limit the number of people who would leave, but when Moshe Rabbeinu refused to compromise, Pharaoh immediately sent them away.

From this verse we can learn to identify the ways of the *yetzer hara* and learn an important message. It is well-known that the power of the *yetzer hara* lies in all the different techniques it uses to incite man and cause him to stumble.

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6 Shevat 5786
24 January 2026

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Hilula

6 Shevat
Rabbi Shimon Gabbai

7 Shevat
Rabbi Levi Sa'adya
Nachmani

8 Shevat
Rabbi Yosef Gian, Av Beit
Din of Bengazi

9 Shevat
Rabbi Refael Shmulevitz,
Rosh Yeshiva of Mir

10 Shevat
Rabbi Shalom Mizrachi,
the Rashash Hakadosh

11 Shevat
Rabbi Yisrael Noach
Weinberg, Rosh Yeshivat
Aish HaTorah

12 Shevat
Rabbi Rafael Pinto zy"ta





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

The Story of the Exodus

“And it shall be when your son will ask you” (*Shemot* 13:14).

Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar *zy”a*, the Ohr HaChaim, writes as follows:

If your son sees the procedure of redeeming a first born and asks you about this, you have an obligation to explain about the redemption from Egypt. But if he does not ask, you only have an obligation to tell him on the night of Pesach. This is derived from the exact wording of the verse, “And it shall be when your son will ask you *at some future time*, ‘What is this?’ you shall say to him, ‘With a strong hand Hashem removed us from Egypt.’” *Even if* he asks at some future time, this obligation to tell still stands. “You shall say to him” implies that if his intention when asking is that you should answer him, then reply. But if he says “What is this?” in disdain and is not truly interested in an answer, do not reply.

Hagaon Rabbi Nissim Karelitz *zt”l* explains the practical application of this ruling (*Chut Shani* 3, p. 234):

If a father and son are present at the redemption ceremony for a first-born son or donkey, and the son asks his father, “What is this?” the father has a Torah obligation to tell him about the miracles of the Exodus, even if the son asks this question during the year and not just on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, as is clear from the verse.

But during the year there is no obligation of “you must begin to speak to him,” where the father has an obligation to tell his son even if he doesn’t ask. This obligation only applies on Pesach, on the night of the fifteenth, since it is derived from the words “And you shall tell your son.”

Serving Hashem

“Not a hoof will be left, for from it shall we take to serve Hashem, our G-d” (*Shemot* 10:26).

The reason we were given the commandment of sacrifices is not because Hashem requires these offerings, since “Hashem’s is the earth and its fullness.” Rather it for *us*, to bring us to repent for our sins. *Chazal* explain that when a kohen slaughters skins and cuts an animal offering, he should realize that this should have been done to him for transgressing Hashem’s command. This will bring him to submission and repentance.

Therefore, explains Rabbi Aharon Shorug’on *zt”l*, a distinguished Turkish Sage, in his *sefer Beit Aharon*, Pharaoh said to Moshe “Go, serve Hashem, only your flock and cattle shall remain behind” (*Shemot* 24). Why do you need to take the flock and cattle? If you wish to give a present to Hashem, then “even your children may go with you.” Maybe sacrifice *them* to Hashem since they are dearer to you?

Moshe answered that the goal of the offerings was to give a gift to Hashem, and it would be fitting to give Him our dearest possession. But since the goal is to subdue our hearts and return to Hashem, we therefore need to offer the flock and cattle.

This is why Moshe said, “Not a hoof will be left, because from it shall we take to serve Hashem, our G-d.” This service of G-d requires submission to our Father in Heaven.



FROM THE TREASURY

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

The Mitzvah of Sanctifying the New Moon

“This month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year” (*Shemot* 12:2).

Rashi writes, “‘This month’ – Hashem showed Moshe the new moon and told him, ‘When you see the moon in its new phase, it shall be Rosh Chodesh for you.’”

Am Yisrael were given the mitzvah of sanctifying the month while still in Egypt. Why was this? And what is the significance of this mitzvah that it was chosen to be one of the first mitzvot Am Yisrael were commanded to observe?

One can explain that the moon is the only creation where it is possible to actually see its renewal in a tangible way each month. When Hashem created the world in six days, the world was completely new, free of any sin. After Adam sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, that newness was blemished, a blemish that continues to accompany Am Yisrael throughout the generations.

Hashem in His great mercy wished to grant Am Yisrael atonement for this sin, therefore He commanded them to bless and sanctify the moon each month. When Am Yisrael see the renewal of the moon, it leads them to renew and purify their souls from the impressions remaining from the sin of Adam Harishon.

In Egypt Am Yisrael descended to the forty-ninth level of impurity (*Zohar Chadash* beg. *Yitro*). They were commanded to observe the mitzvah of sanctifying the new month which had the power of renewing their souls and eradicating the abominations of Egypt from within them. One can also add that since Bnei Yisrael descended to such a low level, it was necessary for them to raise their eyes heavenward and thereby remember “Who created these [things]!” (*Yeshaya* 40:26).

Rosh Chodesh is a day with inherent powers of forgiveness and atonement, since Hashem considers it as one of the six days of creation when the world was clean and fresh and had not yet tasted sin. For this reason Am Yisrael were commanded to offer a sin-offering on Rosh Chodesh.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Hearing Is Believing

A young *talmid chacham* once came to me with his children and asked me to bless him and his family with success. For some reason, I singled out the oldest son and asked the father, "What is his name?" The father told me his name. "And how are his ears?" I continued.

"*Baruch Hashem*. As far as we know, he has no problem with his ears."

But I stubbornly insisted they have his ears checked.

The *avreich* was not overly concerned; they had no reason to assume he had any problem, and the child himself had never complained of an earache. He therefore did not bother investigating the matter.

Two months went by and suddenly the couple noticed that this boy was not obeying them. They found themselves shouting at him and even punishing him for not listening to them. The boy's behaviour went from bad to worse. His bewildered parents could not understand what happened to their previously wonderful, disciplined child.

Slowly but surely, they became suspicious that maybe there was something wrong with his hearing. They noticed that whenever they spoke to him he would try to read their lips. When he could not understand what they wanted, he would repeat, "What? What?" Only after raising their voices could he discern what they were saying.

They finally took him to an ENT specialist. A thorough examination revealed a build-up of fluids in his ears which led to significant hearing loss. The boy was sent for a comprehensive hearing test which indicated a tremendous decrease in his sense of hearing.

Suddenly, like a bolt of lightning, the *avreich* remembered my instructions to check the boy's ears. He regretted not listening immediately, an act which would have saved months of anxiety and angst.

I have no idea why I told him to check the boy's hearing. It was said only in the merit of my righteous forefathers.

cont. from p. 1 >>>

But if man would only stand firm and not budge from his principles, the *yetzer hara* will disappear, just as happened with the wicked Pharaoh. When he saw that Moshe and Aharon were standing firm and not giving in to his claims and temptations, he sent them away from him.

It is also possible to actually move away from the *yetzer hara*, not allowing him to lead you astray. Someone told me that he once entered a store for business purposes and came face to face with an immodest image, putting him in great spiritual danger. What did he do? He sacrificed his business needs and ran out without turning back.

So too with Moshe, one can say he removed himself from Pharaoh so as not to remain in the *rasha's* presence.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Transmitting the Torch of Torah

The following story took place many years ago. A snowstorm was raging in North America and the temperature outside was minus twenty degrees! The snow had piled up to a height of 80 centimetres! The streets were empty. In the Torah v'Daat Yeshiva, the *talmidim* remained in their dormitory rooms. They did not walk to the *beit midrash*, a short distance away.

After two days of being "under siege," three of the *bachurim* became concerned. The next day the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Heiman, was scheduled to give his weekly *shiur klali*. What was the Rosh Yeshiva planning to do, they wondered?

His self-sacrifice for disseminating Torah was well known, and certainly tomorrow too he would come to the Yeshiva with self-sacrifice, despite the snow and the bitter cold — but he would find the *beit midrash* deserted!

The threesome made a decision to also demonstrate self-sacrifice, and go to the shiur. With great difficulty they managed to make their way through the snow without any harm, and arrived at the *beit midrash* which was empty, just as they had assumed. The three waited with anticipation, and exactly at the appointed time they heard the sound of the Rosh Yeshiva's footsteps. He arrived covered in a layer of white snowflakes, but his face was alight with joy.

The Rosh yeshiva smiled at the three heroes, made his way to the stairs of the Aron Kodesh and began delivering the shiur, as usual. He gave over the shiur as if he was standing in front of hundreds of *talmidim*. His face was alight, and the veins on his forehead bulged from the effort of straining his thoughts. Every so often he banged strongly on the *shtender*, his entire being a ball of fire.

At the end of the shiur the three approached the Rosh Yeshiva and asked him, "Why did the Rav expend so much effort delivering the shiur? We are only three boys and would have heard had Rosh Yeshiva whispered..."

The Rosh Yeshiva grew serious and replied, "Do you think that I am giving over the shiur to you alone? I am transmitting the torch of Torah! To you, to your children, to your grandchildren, and all your descendants, to your students, and your students' students. If I don't shout, how will they hear me?!"

The Torah tells us, "And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt and My signs that I placed among them, that you may know that I am Hashem" (*Shemot* 10:2). Why is it not enough for the father to relate all that happened in Egypt? Why does the obligation rest on the grandfather too?

The answer is that passing on the torch of faith from father to son is hinged on the father seeing the emergence of his grandson and great-grandson. **Judaism must be transmitted with intensity, with love, and with warmth, and then success will be seen not only from our sons but from all future generations, b'ezrat Hashem!**

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

The Torah — Our Blueprint



We find that the following central principle in education is repeated in the Torah several times, and is also found in this week's *parsha*. This is the command of "And you shall tell your son" (*Shemot* 13:8). The importance of remembering the past and transmitting tradition bestows our lives with significance and gives us eternity in the world. We are obligated to keep the knowledge of the past in the forefront of our minds and implant this remembrance in our offspring, because the purpose of Creation is for the sake of observing the Torah and its commandments, without diverting to the right or left.

This is what the Maggid, Rabbi Shalom Shwadron zt"l, related:

On one of my trips to *chutz la'aretz*, I found myself seated next to an irreligious Jew on the airplane. This man, as I soon found out, was an architect and professor too. In short, an intelligent fellow who was of the opinion that he knows and understands everything.

The only experience he lacked was coming across a Jew like me with a big beard, who looks like an important Rabbi, interrogating him with questions on Torah and halacha.

The professor turned to me, "Why can you Rabbis not be a little bit more flexible with the halacha? What's your problem? A bit of flexibility, and then the irreligious won't be so put off by you."

This is what I answered him: "Your question indeed requires a good answer, but first we will set your question aside and allow me to ask you what your profession is?"

"I am an architect and engineer," he replied and added, "I am now on my way to *chutz la'aretz* to give over the blueprints for a multi-story building, an exclusive project."

"Could you please show me these plans that

I assume you have with you in your hand luggage?" I asked him.

"With pleasure. But what will the Rabbi gain from a quick look at a complicated and intricate design plan?"

"The truth is that I won't understand much, but just getting some impression of your work with the addition of a few explanations, will enable me to understand something."

The architect agreed and with undisguised pleasure took out a stack of papers. He spread them out before me, pages upon pages. He described and explained, and I showed profound interest. Once I had grasped somewhat of an understanding, I asked him to please give me a few moments of quiet to look through the blueprint.

I scrunched up my forehead as if I was avidly trying to scrutinize the document. My attention was caught by a line which indicated one of the foundations of the building.

After several moments I picked up my head and asked, "Please explain to me why the bottom line that can be found in the south-east corner cannot be moved slightly to the east? And if you make it straight it will also look nicer and less cumbersome? What's the problem, a bit of flexibility here and there, everything will look so much better?"

"Since when do Rabbis understand engineering?" He answered mockingly, "The entire strength and stability of the building depends specifically on those lines. Any deviation even by a millimeter will endanger everything!"

"The laws of engineering are exact, one may not budge from them to the slightest degree," was how he finished his sharp rebuke.

"And since when do engineers understand

Jewish law?" I replied in return. "The entire existence of the world depends on fulfilling the Torah, and all the Torah commandments that we received from Heaven are full of clear laws. So how can you possibly wonder why there is no room for flexibility here and there..."

"When I ask for flexibility concerning just one building that is contingent on the wisdom of a human engineer that took you several weeks or months to design, you get so worked up. Yet concerning our Torah that was given thousands of years ago, you come demanding that the Rabbis charged with guarding the law should intervene with G-dly commandments and show 'flexibility'?!"

"I will tell you a story that will clarify this for you:

"Once there was a poor child who gathered together penny after penny until he was able to fulfil his dream of buying new shoes for Pesach. With a bundle of coins in his hand he went to the Arab market where one could find cheap merchandise, and came across a pair of shoes that he liked. But to his great consternation, the shoe was a good fit for only one of his feet, while he could not get his other foot inside the other shoe.

"The Arab merchant noticed his distress and tried all different ways to make the shoe fit. When all his efforts were in vain, he said to the child, "I have a solution for you. If you give me permission, I will cut away a small part of your toe and then the shoe will fit you well."

"This is a fitting comparison for all the fools who wish to adapt the Torah to the spirit of the times, and do not understand that one must adjust the times to the spirit of the Torah, just as one must suit the shoe to the foot and not the foot to the shoe..."



"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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