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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David



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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitá**
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l**, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"á**

Maskil L'David

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitá**

Curbing the Passion for Materialism

"And the L-rd spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai, saying"

(Vayikra 25:1)

There are several subjects discussed in this parashah; the subject of Shemittah – after six years of working the land, one must refrain from any work in the fields in the seventh year. The subject of Yovel – after seven Shemittah years, in the fiftieth year, there is another year of Sabbatical for the land, in which the properties return to their original owners, and in which the slaves are freed. The subject of Ribbit (interest) – that one is forbidden to give a loan in exchange for any profit whatsoever. The subject of Shabbat – at the end of the parashah, Shabbat is mentioned again; after six days of work comes Shabbat, which is a day of rest. We need to clarify in depth the nature of these mitzvot, and what Hashem wants us to learn from them. We also need to explain what the connection is between all the different subjects in the parashah and the mitzvot mentioned in it.

It is characteristic of people that habit becomes nature, and a person that becomes accustomed to being the owner of his property begins to feel that his property belongs to him and he is the sole owner of his possession. Consequently, when he has a mitzvah or obligation to fulfill with his money or property, it is more difficult for him to do it, since he feels that his property is his, and he does not want to relinquish it to others. Consequently, Hashem wanted to help B'nei Yisrael and instill in their souls the great foundation of faith in the Creator of the World, and that they should not be attached to material possessions, since then it is difficult for a person to fulfill mitzvot. Also, they should know to Whom all the wealth and honor truly belong. Thus, Hashem commanded us to observe many mitzvot to train us to succeed.

This is the reason for Shemittah following six years of working the fields, since a person begins to think that he earned a lot and has even a greater opportunity to get rich after an additional year of work. The Creator of the World says: No! He must abstain from work and rest in the seventh year and is not allowed to work even if it seems that he would suffer a loss. Then, through this commandment, the person stops his race in life and the pursuit of money and observes a year of Sabbatical in order to review his affairs, until he reaches an understanding to Whom money and property really belong – "For Mine is the entire earth" (Shemot 19:5).

By doing so he comes to acknowledge all the Creator of the World has given him. Also the mitzvah of

Yovel stems from the same reason, so that a person should not feel that the world belongs to him, but there is a Master of the World whom everything belongs to. Likewise, the mitzvah of Ribbit (interest) alludes to this, since a person can assume that his money belongs to him, and he can do with it as he pleases, lending it with interest in order to gain profit. Hashem forbade this with a severe prohibition. The purpose is to sanctify the most material possessions of a person, which is his money, so that he should not be drawn after materialism, and he should not constantly contemplate how to earn more money. Of course, one who is about to lose all his money and is in need of a loan to bail him out, Hashem wants that his fellow should help him out of his dire straits, but he is prohibited from lending money to his brethren with interest.

The question is, what is the connection between the prohibition of lending with interest to the Exodus that is mentioned in the parashah? I would like to suggest the following. All the money that Bnei Yisrael took from the Egyptians was borrowed, and therefore, Hashem is reminding Bnei Yisrael that they too did not pay interest on the money they borrowed.

Accordingly, all the money they took from the Egyptians was borrowed money and they did not pay interest on it, so then why should they lend their brethren from this money with interest? They are obligated to recall that just as they received the money from the Egyptians as a loan without interest, and it was borrowed money, so too they must be aware that the money belongs to the Creator of the World, and He grants them life and sustenance, and when the time comes, He takes it from them. Therefore, why should they lend money with interest and not instead use the money to perform acts of loving-kindness with their brethren.

This is why in the year of Shemittah and in the Yovel we are commanded to free every Jewish slave, and also to return all property to its original owner, since this signifies that we are not truly owners over slaves and property, but they belong to Hashem, and He gives it to us at His will and returns it to its original owners at His will.

Thus, we see the thread connecting all the subjects mentioned in the parashah from beginning to end. The material possessions, such as money and acquisitions in this world, are not truly ours, but we are only officials of Hashem in this world to do his will with whatever material property He gives us. This is what Shemittah and Yovel and Shabbat and also the mitzvah of abstaining from Ribbit (interest) teach us.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

24 - Rabbi Eliezer Tzvi Safran The
Admor of Kamarna

25 - Rabbi Chaim Churi

25 - Rabbi Shlomo Amsalem

26 - Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato

27 - Rabbi Yitzchak bar Yissachar
Abulafiya

28 - Shmuel Hanavi

29 - Rabbi Meir of Parmishlan



Walking in their Ways

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

Divinely Enclosed

A Jewish philanthropist donated the sum of 8,500 francs to our institutions. He placed the money in an envelope and sent it to me. I was in a terrible hurry just then, so I placed the envelope inside a sefer and forgot the entire matter.

Some time later, the man met me and asked if I had received the donation. Of course, I thanked him profusely for his charitable act. In order not to cause him anguish, I did not recount that I had no recollection of where I had placed the money.

Six years passed. All of my sefarim were transferred to the yeshiva office. The yeshiva was undergoing renovations, and an electrician had been called in. At the end of the day, the electrician came into the office and asked for his payment, which was 8,500 francs.

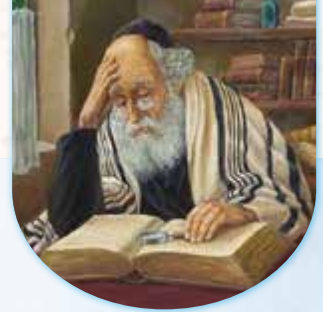
I was the only one in the office. The secretary who was supposed to pay this worker had already left. I did not have that amount of money, and was at a loss as to what to do.

I asked the man to return the next day for payment, but he said it could not wait.

My mind worked feverishly, as I tried thinking of how to come up with the money. Suddenly, with siyata di'Shemaya, R' Yehudah Chadad appeared. He excitedly related that while the workers were arranging the sefarim, one of my holy books had fallen down. As they picked it up, they found an envelope stuck in it, containing a large amount of cash. He hurried to bring it to me.

Suddenly the events of six years ago came flooding back to me. To my delight, there lay the exact amount of 8,500 francs, patiently waiting to be handed to the electrician.

I was astounded at this amazing turnabout of hashgachah pratit. Just when I needed the funds, the exact amount was discovered. I also realized why I had to forget about the money all these years, which is unusual for me. And why I placed the envelope in a sefer, which I never do. Hashem is the grand Orchestrator, Who arranges all events.



Words of Our Sages

Who will take responsibility for firing?

"And you shall not wrong, one man his fellow Jew" (Vayikra 25:17)

Rashi comments on the words of Chazal in Torat Kohanim: Here, Scripture is warning against wronging verbally, namely, that one must not provoke his fellow [Jew]." Likewise, Chazal say: Ye shall not therefore wrong one another; Scripture refers to verbal wrongs.

Furthermore, they warn (Baba Metziah 59a): "Yet though the gates of prayer are locked, the gates of tears are not." Rashi comments: "The gates of Heaven are not closed before the cries of one who was verbally wronged."

What is the point, and how critical is it?

Rabbeinu Bechaye, z"l, writes regarding this parashah: This is because the victim is terribly distressed and he feels at a loss. Then he cries from the depths of his heart in prayer through pain, and his prayer, which emanates from a broken heart, pierces the Heavens.

Likewise, Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian, zt"l, writes in his sefer "Lev Eliyahu" (8:1): A person can become very sanctified by being careful not to harm or trouble his fellow. For example, when a student enters his room in the dormitory of the yeshiva and sees his friend sleeping, and he is careful not to make any noise or turn on the light, so that he should not disturb his friend's rest, this comes from his love of his fellow, which stems from his belief that "God created man in His image."

This person is graced with tremendous sanctity and holiness. He is truly fortunate and he finds favor in Hashem's Eyes for this consideration. It is inconceivable how much success he can achieve through this, rising higher and higher in his level of Torah study and the service of Hashem.

The yeshiva of Be'er Yaakov had a widowed woman working as the cook for a long period of time. When she got old, she did not manage so well anymore, and the students suffered, until she had to be fired. However, the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zt"l, was afraid of firing her, since she was a widow, and it is well-known how the Torah warns against causing a widow pain.

Rabbi Moshe Shmuel went to consult Rabbi Yitzchak Ze'ev Soloveitchik, zt"l; how should he handle the sensitive situation. Rabbi Soloveitchik told him that, indeed, he has to fire her, since there is no other choice. However, he should make sure that the other members of the yeshiva's administration also sign the letter of dismissal, so that they would all share in the harsh accusations they may face from the Attribute of Justice. He should not shoulder it alone.

The Rabbi added: It is worthwhile to give her as much money as she demands, because money is the cheapest way to compensate another person's grief. He showed him the words of the Rambam regarding this matter in "Hilchos De'ot" (86:10).

Rabbi Soloveitchik explained that the Rambam was not advising one how to simply treat the widow with respect, but was advising us how careful to be not to cause a widow sorrow, since the Torah relates severely to this matter.

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week: **"O Lord, Who are my power and my strength"** (Yirmeyahu 16:19)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah mentions the calamity that Hashem will bring upon Bnei Yisrael if they do not observe His commandments, which is similar to the rebuke mentioned in the parashah, foretelling the troubles that would come upon Bnei Yisrael if they would not observe the laws of the Torah.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

They will impoverish him

A person should be careful not to praise his fellow excessively which can ultimately cause him a loss. For example, a guest who goes out in the center of the city and publicizes all that his host lavished upon him; good food, drinks, and that he went out of his way for him. Consequently, unworthy people may flock to his house and impoverish him.

Regarding this matter, it is stated that "He who blesses his friend in a loud voice early every morning, it shall be considered a curse for him." This can be applied to a situation in which a person obtains a loan from his friend and publicizes his friend's benevolence to the public. This may cause many people to harass him.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

An Excerpt from the Archives of the Krakow Chevra Kadisha

After the death of our revered teacher, the author of Megaleh Amukot, a young man living in Krakow went to see the administrator of the Chevra Kadisha because he wanted to purchase the burial plot adjacent to the grave of the Megeleh Amukot. This young man was not known as a famous Talmid Chacham, which is why the administrator rejected his request, one that seemed marked by a sign of pride and vanity. The Gaon and Tzaddik who had just left this world was among the greatest names of Torah. He had written many works, and it was impossible to give the plot adjacent to his grave to someone who was unknown, a common man, this being contrary to Halachah.

Yet the young man did not give up, and when all the administrators went home, he went to speak to one of the oldest ones who remained there. He implored him to give his approval for this purchase, for his soul ardently yearned for that place close to the Gaon and Tzaddik. "No price will seem too much for me," he repeated to the elderly man who was over 80 years old. "I will give you whatever price you ask."

"Do you agree to pay 1,000 silver rubbles?" the old man asked with a little sarcasm. The answer did not take long: "Yes!" the young man declared, and he took out the money from his wallet and handed it to the old man. This elderly administrator told himself, "What's preventing me from taking this money? I don't have much longer to live. I'm old and this man is young, hardly 20 years old. From now until the time he passes away, there will be other administrators, and who among them will come to me and claim this money?" Now the next day, the bitter news spread that this young avrech had suddenly died. The Chevra Kadisha was called upon to take care of his burial, but since no one was aware of the secret agreement that he had concluded with the old man, the administrators chose a burial plot that seemed appropriate to them. The night following the burial, the young man appeared in the dream of the old administrator that had sold him the burial plot adjacent to that of the Megaleh Amukot, demanding that he transfer his body to the grave that he had purchased.

This dream, which the old man paid no attention to in the beginning, occurred again the next day and the day after that. The young man warned the Chevra Kadisha's administrator that if he did not obtain the adjacent plot, he would convene him to the Celestial Court.

This severe warning greatly worried the old man, who did not know how to get out of this predicament. It was to the point that, in his fear and distress, he went to find the Rav of the city and told him everything that had happened and asked him for advice. The Rav was astounded

when he heard the story. He severely reprimanded the old man for what he had done, and demanded that he give him the money he had received so that he could give it to charity. This would allow the avrech's soul to rest in peace. Nevertheless, the Rav absolutely refused to give him permission to transfer the dead man's body to the unused burial plot adjacent to the grave of the Megaleh Amukot. The old administrator was overcome by fear. What was he now going to do? The Rav gave him his cane and ordered that he go to the grave of the young man and summon him to Din Torah at the Rav's home three days hence in the afternoon. Since the old man feared for his life, he obeyed. To his great surprise, the dead man accepted to present himself to a Din Torah as the Rav had asked.

When the old man arrived at the Rav's home at the prescribed time, he saw that in the room in which the Rav studied was a partition that had been set up, behind which the dead man was to be. The Rav was seated on the other side, and with him was the Chevra Kadisha's administrator. The spirit on the other side of the partition presented his grievances: "I obtained the rights to the burial plot and purchased it with my own money. No one has the right to chase me away from it." The Rav asked the dead man to identify himself by name, but he responded that this was forbidden for him to do. To calm the dead man, whose voice could be heard coming from the other side of the partition, the Rav said, "As a result, if it is forbidden for you to identify yourself and to give your actual name, we cannot grant your request. The money has thus been distributed to the poor for your soul to rest in peace. And now, go and rest in peace." However the dead man refused to give in. He repeated that the administrator had not kept his word, and he demanded that he rectify his mistake.

Upon hearing these words, the Rav was filled with great consternation. He finally had the idea of saying, "If such is the case – if your soul is so great that it is forbidden to reveal your identity – then take action yourself and make your body role from its present resting place to the burial plot that you asked for and purchased with your own money on the day before your death." The Rav promised him only that he would make the Chevra Kadisha aware of this decision so that the plot adjacent to the grave of the Megaleh Amukot would not be given to anyone else. The next day, when the members of the Chevra Kadisha of Krakow went to the cemetery, they found a new grave that they did not recognize and which they had not dug. The administrators then convened to discuss the situation and decided to erect a headstone upon it, and since they were unaware of the dead man's name, they decided to inscribe the following words upon it: "His Neighbor will Testify for Him." This story spread far and wide.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik,
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit'a



Humbleness and modesty

We can explain the connection between these two parshiyot, "Behar" and "Bechukotai," in the following way: In order to merit acquiring the Torah that was given on Har Sinai, a person must humble himself and rid himself of pride to resemble Har Sinai. Even though there were other mountains taller and more impressive, Hashem chose to give the Torah on the low mountain of Har Sinai.

Why is this so?

Because this is the condition for acquiring the Torah: humility and modesty.

How can one achieve the self-effacement and humility characteristic of Har Sinai?

The answer is:

"If you follow My statutes."

Rashi explains, "You shall toil in the study of Torah." Through laboring in Torah and engaging in it, a person learns self-effacement and acquires humility, because when he is preoccupied with something so lofty and exalted, he does not pay attention to trivial things. This, then, is the connection between parshiyot Behar and Bechukotai.

I once visited an important woman in the hospital, who, through Hashem's Kindness, miraculously survived a strong earthquake that hit her area. Her whole house trembled, and a huge picture hanging on the wall fell on her head... At that moment she lost consciousness, but through Hashem's Mercy, she regained full consciousness.

When I asked her why she did not follow the rules of safety during an earthquake and go under the table, or stand under a doorpost; why did she remain in a vulnerable position, she explained:

On the day that the earthquake hit, she had received a large shipment of diamonds from Belgium, and she was busy just then sorting them according to their size. She was so absorbed in her work, that she did not notice that there was an earthquake.

I learned an important lesson from her response, that when a person is busy and absorbed in something that matters to him, he does not notice anything and does not pay attention to what is happening around him, since he is entirely preoccupied with whatever he is engaged in.

This, too, is true regarding the holy Torah. The more one labors in it and is absorbed in it, the more he will succeed in achieving self-effacement and humility, and nothing will bother him. Even if someone will slight his honor, or will not treat him respectfully, he will not pay attention to it, since he will be entirely preoccupied by the Torah and engaged in it, as it is stated (Mishlei 5:19), "You shall always be intoxicated with her love."



Yaakov Avinu was the first to say “Amen, yehai Shmay Rabbah mevorach l’olam ilelomei olmaya – Amen, May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.”

Chazal say (Pesachim 56a), that when Yaakov Avinu felt that his days were numbered, he gathered his sons and attempted to reveal to them the End of days, as it is said: “Gather and I will tell you what will happen to you at the End of Days.” Since Hashem did not want him to reveal it, the Shechinah withdrew from him.

Yaakov Avinu was shaken and feared: Perhaps, Heaven forbid, one of my sons are not worthy, as happened to Avraham, who had Yishmael, and like his

father Yitzchak, who had Eisav. Thus, his sons, the holy Tribes, declared: “Hear, O Israel: The L-rd is our G-d; the L-rd is one.” “Just as there is only One in your heart, so too is there only One in our hearts.”

At that moment, Yaakov Avinu said: “Baruch Shem kevod Malchuto l’olam va’ed – Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.”

This also appears in the Yerushalmi with a slight change: After the declaration of the Tribes, Yaakov Avinu said: “Yehai Shmay Rabbah mevorach l’olam ilelomei olmaya – May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.”

Then, what did Yaakov Avinu actually say; “Baruch Shem kevod Malchuto l’olam va’ed – Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity,” or “Yehai Shmay Rabbah mevorach l’olam ilelomei olmaya – May His great Name be blessed forever and ever?”

A closer look at the two verses reveals that both have the same meaning:

“Baruch Shem kevod Malchuto l’olam va’ed – Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity” means “Yehai Shmay Rabbah mevorach l’olam

ilelomei olmaya – May His great Name be blessed forever and ever” in Aramaic. Then, during Kaddish, why do we not recite the verse in Hebrew, but rather in Aramaic?

The Midrash (Devarim Rabbah 2:35) states that when Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, he heard the angels say, “Baruch Shem kevod Malchuto l’olam va’ed – Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for all eternity.” Moshe took those wonderful words of praise and revealed them to Bnei Yisrael. But, in order not to arouse the jealousy of the angels, they are recited in Aramaic, and when we say them in Hebrew following the declaration of “Shema,” they are said in a whisper.

Rav Assi likens this with a parable to a man who stole diamonds from the king’s palace. When he gave them to his wife, he warned her not to display them in public, but wear them only inside her home.

The analogy: Once, and only once a year, on the most holy day of Yom Kippur, when Am Yisrael are like the angels, they say this verse out loud.



Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

Search under the Bed

One year, the people of Morocco experienced exceptionally difficult times. There was no rainfall, causing a shortage of food and money. In that year, shelichim from Eretz Yisrael and from Marrakesh arrived in Mogador to collect donations for orphans and Torah scholars.

The gabbaim of the city were at a loss. What should they do? On one hand, they could not turn the charity-collectors away empty-handed. On the other hand, they did not know whom to assist; those from Eretz Yisrael, or those from Marrakesh.

There were not enough funds to provide for both, because it had been such a difficult year. What did they do? They went to consult with Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, requesting his advice.

Hearing their problem, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol told the gabbaim to go home and return to him the next day. Meanwhile, he instructed them to offer food, drinks, and lodging for the shelichim.

The gabbaim did as instructed and returned to Rabbi Chaim’s house the following morning. Rabbi Chaim inquired of them,

“Tell me! Did this pauper, so-and-so, pass away recently? The gabbaim went to check in the files of the Chevrah Kadisha and found that he had indeed died.

“Yes, it is so. This pauper died yesterday.”

Rabbi Chaim ordered the gabbaim, “Go to the pauper’s house and search under his bed. Bring me everything that you find there.”

The gabbaim were taken aback. After all, the deceased was known to be a destitute pauper. What could they possibly find there? However, since they knew they must obey the Rav, they hurried to the pauper’s house. They searched under the bed and found a hidden sack filled with gold, silver, and precious gems.

The gabbaim returned to Rabbi Chaim with the treasures. Since the pauper had no family to claim the inheritance, Rabbi Chaim took all the riches and divided them evenly between the shelichim from Eretz Yisrael and from Marrakesh. There was even enough money left to support the poor people of Mogador (Mekor Chaim).