

Pinchas

July 15th 2017

21st of Tamuz 5777

707

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by **Mosdot Orot Chaim U'Moshe** in Israel

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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"ta



Maskil L'David

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

Of Mockery and Merit

"Distress the Midianites and you shall strike them"

(Bamidbar 25:17)

Only after he battled against Sichon and Og, was Moshe instructed to fight against Midian. Midian was a nation so steeped in impurity, that at first it was difficult to fight them, as the kelippah surrounding them kept them hidden. In order to do battle with them, Moshe had to first reveal them to the world. Sichon and Og, Midian's devotees, protected them from all enemies. As soon as Moshe Rabbeinu destroyed these nations, the Midianites entered into a panic. They knew they were next. This is why they sent for Bilaam to curse Am Yisrael. The moment Bilaam opened his mouth to blaspheme Bnei Yisrael, the defilement of Midian's kelippah was in the open, revealed to all. Now they were vulnerable to battle and defeat.

Regarding the war against Og, Hashem told Moshe, "Do not fear him, for I have delivered him into your hands" (ibid. 21:34). Moshe had feared fighting against Og, believing that Og's good deed in informing Avraham of Lot's capture would stand in his merit (Niddah 61a).

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l, asks a scintillating question in his sefer Darash Moshe: It is true that Og was indirectly responsible for saving Lot's life by reporting to Avraham that Lot had been taken captive. But Og's motives were far from genuine. He expected Avraham to die in battle. Then he would be free to marry Sara. Could a mitzvah mired in such motivations bring merit? Why did Moshe find this worrying?

Another question: In Parashat Chukat, we read about the parah adumah, a mitzvah that is beyond our comprehension. Even Moshe was not told the reason behind this mitzvah. Why does Hashem give us mitzvot that are incomprehensible? Doesn't this give the gentiles reason to mock us and our holy Torah?!

When it comes to spiritual matters, there is a vast difference between Bnei Yisrael and the non-Jews. This is specifically so regarding faith in Hashem. Even if there will be a non-Jew who believes in one G-d, as soon as the going gets rough, his faith will flounder until it's completely gone.

Conversely, Am Yisrael fulfills its obligations, no questions asked. Whether or not there is a logical reason for a mitzvah is irrelevant. It's a command of the King and must be fulfilled, no matter what. Since the nations' faith is faltering at best, they ridicule Am Yisrael for the chukim, those mitzvot whose reasoning is unknown.

Hashem gave us these chukim for our benefit. When the Satan comes before Hashem, demanding to know why He chose us of all the nations, the defending angel has a ready answer. "Ribbono shel Olam! See how these nations ridicule the Torah and mitzvot! In contrast, Your holy children, Am Yisrael, are ready to give their lives to uphold Your mitzvot and willingly do them with love. Even when they don't know the reason behind a mitzvah, they do it anyway, because that is Your will. They are the most fitting nation to be Yours."

So the chukim, which are beyond human comprehension, serve as the remedy before the malady. As the nations mock us for upholding them, they are giving our defense attorney a good reason for Hashem to favor His nation.

Now we might understand why Moshe feared Og's zechut. Although he had a hidden agenda, the fact that Lot was rescued brought untold blessing to our nation. Rut Hamo'aviah, the mother of royalty, descended from Lot, as well as David Melech Yisrael, her great-grandson, and his son, Shlomo, Hashem's beloved one. Mashiach, may he come speedily in our day, will also come from this illustrious family that traces its lineage to Lot.

Had Lot died in the war, our nation would have lost out on all this greatness. It was Og who had the merit of Lot's survival.

Hashem told Moshe, "Do not fear him." Perhaps Og did have a merit. But no matter what zechut he had, he could not compare in the least with the zechut of Torah. The nations lack the merit of Torah. Not only do they not possess this merit, they have the boldness to mock it. Therefore, any merit that Og may have had dissolved into nothingness in the face of the Torah's power to protect Am Yisrael.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

21 - Rabbi Yehudah HaCohen Shako

22 - Rabbi Shlomo MiKarlín, Hy"d

23 - Rabbi Moshe Cordevero

24 - Rabbi Yitzchak Kulitz, Rabbi of
Yerushalayim

25 - Rabbi Yisrael Yehoshua MiKutna,
author of "Yeshuot Malko"

26 - Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfreid

27 - Rabbi Elazar Abuchatzzeira



Walking in their Ways

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

Kept in Line by the Stick

One of my prized possessions is the walking stick of my grandfather, the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a. This cane is priceless in my eyes. I would never sell it for all the money in the world.

One day, I had an urge to hold this cane in my hands. I searched for it throughout the house, but could not find it. I tried to remember the last place I had seen it. But to no avail. I could not find the elusive stick anywhere.

Needless to say, I was greatly disturbed by this. The lost stick gave me no rest, and I was very troubled for a long time afterward.

Finally, my grandfather had pity on me. He appeared to me in a dream one night and said, "Today you will find the stick."

But upon awakening, I did not give the dream much credence. I had been thinking about the cane for so many weeks. That was certainly the reason why I dreamed about it at night.

To my utter surprise, a woman approached me that very day, returning the precious stick. She could not stop thanking me for lending it to her.

I was in a state of shock. I had no recollection whatsoever of lending her the stick. Throughout the long weeks of my lamenting its loss, I never remembered giving it to anyone. I was sure the stick had been stolen or had simply disappeared into thin air.

This incident drove home the point that often Hashem wants to remind us Who is the Manager of this world in its every detail. At times, one feels he is in control of his own life. Hashem sends him reminders to help him banish such thoughts and keep in mind Who is the Master of the House.

This is what happened with the walking stick. I thought I could take charge of it and protect it from harm. Hashem therefore sent me the message that He runs the world.

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"The words of Yirmeyahu"

(Yirmeyahu 1)

The connection to the parashah: In the haftarah, Yirmeyahu predicts the churban of Yerushalayim. This is the first of the three haftarot read on the three Shabbatot preceding Tisha B'Av.



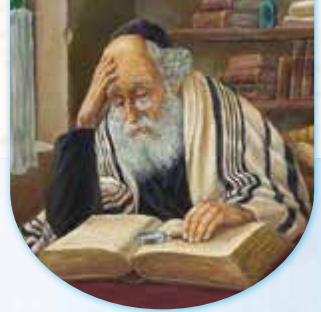
Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Prohibited Despite Pressure

Lashon hara is categorically forbidden, even if others are coaxing and cajoling him. And even if someone as important as a parent or teacher is asking him for information that may contain lashon hara or avak lashon hara, one may not disclose this information.

Even if one will lose his entire source of income if he does not relate this information, he is forbidden to do so.



Words of Our Sages

Beyond the Call of Duty

"Therefore say, 'I hereby give him My covenant of peace'"
(Bamidbar 25:12)

The Midrash expounds: Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "He (Pinchas) justly deserves his reward." What is the significance of Pinchas "justly" deserving his reward?

Rabbi Benzion Saneh explains:

This act of zealotry was totally out of character for Pinchas, grandson of Aharon Hakohen, the lover and pursuer of peace.

The following analogy will illustrate: The newly-elected president of the U.S. wished to thank his constituents for their votes. Toward this end, he traveled extensively throughout the country, dispensing thanks and smiles all around.

During one of his stops, terrorists somehow managed to infiltrate his entourage and shot at the wheels of his car. One of the president's bodyguards selflessly threw himself at the terrorists and neutralized them.

All the newspapers were full of accolades for this courageous bodyguard and the president sent him a heartfelt, personal letter.

After the excitement died down, the president felt that a ski vacation was just the thing to help him get into shape for his daunting job ahead.

Of course, his bodyguards accompanied him to the ski resort. However, none of them was adept at skiing. By the time they were properly dressed for the occasion, the president was sliding merrily down the slope. The only one in attendance was the ski expert who keeps vigil of all the visitors.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, two terrorists jumped in their path, their guns pointed at the president's head. Without thinking, the ski expert threw the president to the ground, thereby saving him from a bullet in the head. With tremendous expertise, he maneuvered the skis so that they struck the terrorists in the shins, completely neutralizing them. In this manner, he saved the president's life.

The ski expert's picture appeared in all the papers and the president presented him with \$2,000,000.

People were surprised. "Why did you give him such a large reward, when the bodyguard who saved you previously only got a letter of thanks?"

"The first man was hired as a bodyguard. He was doing his duty. The second man is a ski expert. What experience does he have with terrorists? He went beyond the line of duty. For that, I rewarded him so handsomely."

"Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharaon HaKohen." Pinchas was a Kohen. Peace was in his blood. The zealotry demanded to stand up against a nation with a spear in hand, was anathema to him. Yet, when the time called for it, he did just that. For this, he was richly rewarded.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

One of the favorite mitzvos of Rabbi Moshe Weiss zt"l, a Holocaust survivor, was answering Amen to berachot, especially to birchot hashachar. Toward that end, he would go from Beit Keneset to Beit Keneset, responding Amen to hundreds of the congregants' berachot. When he was too old to do this, his devoted children and grandchildren would come to his house to say these berachot and afford him the opportunity to answer Amen.

It was the last day of Rabbi Weiss's life. All his family was summoned to his hospital bed, where the monitors indicated a drastic drop in his blood pressure. When the sign was given, they burst forth in Vidui and Kriyat Shema.

To everyone's surprise, just as soon as they concluded Shema, his blood pressure seemed to stabilize. Then it dropped sharply. Again, the family broke out in recitation of Vidui and Kriyat Shema. But it looked like his neshamah refused to leave his body. His blood pressure was steady for a while and then once again plummeted downward.

The night wore on until the new day broke. One of the grandchildren said, "We all remember how concerned Grandfather was to hear the recitation of birchot hashachar each day. Let's use this opportunity to give him the zechut to hear these berachot while he's still among us."

Each one individually recited the birchot hashachar. Rabbi Moshe lay in his bed, motionless. But those present were sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he was listening to every word.

A few moments of kedushah passed. As the last of the people concluded birchot hashachar, everyone said Kriyat Shema with tremendous kavanah. Rabbi Moshe's neshamah departed amidst the angels' call, "Open the gates for a righteous nation that is meticulous to answer Amen."

During the shivah, many were inspired by this tale. One visitor added, "It's not for naught that Rabbi Moshe lived to be ninety. All his life, he was careful to answer Amen 90 times a day."

Treasures

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



The Sky's the Limit

Raising one's children to a life of Torah and mitzvot is paramount. It should be one of the prime pursuits of every Jew.

Moshe comforted Aharon before his death by lauding him for how he had raised his children. "Fortunate are you that you merit seeing your crown pass on to your children." Moshe's promise that his son, Elazar, would don the mantle of Kehunah and continue in his holy work was a tremendous consolation for Aharon.

For someone like Aharon, who dedicated every moment of life to bringing kiddush Hashem into the world, hearing about his imminent death was a strong blow. Aharon surely wished he could live longer and continue in his great work. However, hearing that his progeny would continue after him, gave him deep satisfaction. There is nothing that gives one as much pleasure as knowing that his children are following in his ways.

Moreover, the fact that Elazar would continue Aharon's work meant that Aharon himself lived on. For this reason, Hashem instructed Elazar to don the clothing of the Kohen Gadol before Aharon passed on. Seeing his son in full regalia would give Aharon tremendous nachat. He would realize that the mantle of Kehunah is continuing in his family.

Aharon's burial site, also, is revealed to us. Hashem wants Bnei Yisrael to gaze at this place and remember Aharon's legacy of Torah and yirah. If we, like Aharon, invest in our children's spiritual welfare, we, too, will reap untold nachat from them.

Rashi says that Aharon's burial site at Har Hahar is "one mountain atop another," just like one apple sitting on another (Bamidbar 20:25). I would like to add that this, too, contains a message. One should never suffice with the bare minimum when it comes to child-rearing. Rather, he should invest untold efforts to ascend the "mountain of Hashem." And when he is "at the top" of his enterprise in chinuch habanim, he should look up to the next mountain, the one atop the first one, so to speak. When it comes to child education, there's no limit to the investment parents are expected to make.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



An Exceptional Performance

Rabbi Meir Yechiel HaLevi of Ostrovitz zt”l was an avid fighter for the sanctity of our nation.

A wandering theater once arrived at his town.



The owners wished to perform on Shabbat. Try as he might, Rabbi Meir Yechiel couldn't convince them

to change their minds.

What did he do? A short while before the performance was scheduled to begin, he sat himself down in the front row. When the attendees walked in, they noticed him immediately. They slunk away in shame. Needless to say, the performance did not take place that day.

On Motzaei Shabbat, the tzaddik called for the managers. He paid them for their losses from his own pocket.

Men of Faith

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

Rabbi Yaakov Pinto, shlita, once traveled with his friend to Mogador, in order to prostrate himself on the grave of his forefather, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. When he arrived at the cemetery, he noticed an elderly gentile cleaning the tombstone.

The friend introduced Rabbi Yaakov Pinto to the gentile, and told him: “This is Rabbi Yaakov, shlita, the descendant of Rabbi Chaim Pinto.”

The gentile turned to Rabbi Yaakov and told him, “I must tell you a story about your holy forefather. Once I needed a large amount of money in order to buy a lamb for a feast that I was celebrating in my house. I did not have a penny with which to buy the lamb. Furthermore, my wife warned me that if I didn't buy the lamb, it would be better for me not to come home...

“Frantically, I went to the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim, and I cried at the grave, until I fell asleep. In my dream, I saw Rabbi Chaim telling me, ‘Do not worry. Go to the market and select a lamb of your choice; no one will ask you for any money. In addition, go to the clothing store and buy freely whatever you and your family need. No one will charge you for the clothes; I will pay for whatever you take.’

“When I woke up,” the gentile continued, “I was frightened and did not know what to do. Who knows what they would do to me if I followed these instructions? I related the dream to my wife,

but she just laughed at me, saying that ever since I had begun to take care of the Jewish cemetery, I had lost my mind.

“In the end, I decided to follow the Rav's instructions, despite my fears. I went to the marketplace and found a choice lamb. Indeed, no one asked me for money. Afterward, I went to the clothing store and fitted myself with a new suit and selected clothing for the children. The owners did not ask me to pay for what I bought. I arrived home joyful.

Dear reader:

When I heard this story, I worried and feared: Perhaps this involved theft. After all, the man took the lamb and clothes without paying. Surely this was a miracle, but was it also considered stealing?

With the help of G-d, it occurred to me that no lamb or clothes were stolen from anyone. It is similar to the story of the prophet Elisha who told the woman that the little oil she had in the bottle would fill thousands of bottles, and she should sell them in the market to pay her debts to the king. Whatever was left, she could live off.

These are the deeds of tzaddikim, whose merits are held in high esteem by Hashem, to the extent that they can literally bring new creations into existence. Those who have experienced it first-hand can appreciate it.