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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, shlitia
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, shlitia

The Spiritual Riches of Yakov

“Thus said your servant Yakov,
“I have sojourned with Lavan,
and I have tarried until now”

(Bereishit 32:5)

Rashi comments: Heb. גרתי I did not become an officer or a dignitary, but a stranger (גר). It is not worthwhile for you to hate me on account of your father's blessing, [with] which he blessed me (27:29): “You shall be a master over your brothers,” for it was not fulfilled in me (Tanchuma Buber Vayishlach 5). Another explanation: גרתי has the numerical value of 613. That is to say: I lived with the wicked Lavan, but I kept the 613 commandments, and I did not learn from his evil deeds.

The Torah describes how Yakov Avinu prepared for his meeting with Eisav his brother. Yakov Avinu sends messengers to Eisav laden with lots of sheep and cattle, in order to pacify Eisav, who greatly desired to kill Yakov. Besides for the gifts that Yakov sent with the messengers, he asked them also to convey a message to Eisav, that despite his sojourn to Charan to Lavan's house, he retained his righteousness and observed all 613 mitzvot, and was not tempted, G-d forbid, to follow the evil ways of the local people, as Rashi comments that the word, גרתי – sojourned” are the same letters as גרתי – 613”. He intended to transmit the message to his brother that he was careful to fulfill Hashem's commandments even in a place of idolatry.

In light of all the above, a puzzling question arises. Why would Eisav care if Yakov retained his lofty spiritual level or not? Eisav's entire life revolved around idolatry, bloodshed, and incest. In fact, Eisav degraded his position as a first-born, and he represented the height of impurity, as it is stated in Chazal (see Targum Yonatan 27:5), that when Eisav was asked to bring delicacies before his father Yitzchak, but was not successful in hunting an animal, he brought his father the head of a dog instead of a sheep. This is most difficult to understand; why did Yakov find it necessary to transmit this message through his messengers?

Yakov Avinu continues and says, “It is not worth it for you to hate me.” This is surprising, since as a rule Eisav hates Yakov (Sifri Beha'alotcha 69). This hatred helps the Jewish people cleave to their Judaism and stick to their allegiance to their Father in Heaven. If not for this hatred, the Jewish people would assimilate among the nations and there would be no trace of them left.

We can explain it in the following way. Upon seeing the despicable deeds of his brother Eisav, Yakov was worried about his future spiritual status

and wanted to bring him back to teshuvah. Yakov Avinu was grieved that Eisav his brother, the son of holy ancestors, had sunk to the depths of depravity and transgressed the three cardinal sins. Yakov felt inwardly, that since Eisav was the son of holy fathers, he possessed the ability and potential to do teshuvah. Similarly, the story is brought about Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish (Baba Metzia 84a); Reish Lakish was the head of a gang of bandits, and he once saw Rabbi Yochanan across the river, but mistook him for a woman. His lust overtook him, and he jumped across the river in one leap to fulfill his desires. Rabbi Yochanan perceived his powerful potential and told Reish Lakish, “Your strength should be for the Torah.” In addition, Rabbi Yochanan promised Reish Lakish that if he would leave his corrupt ways and correct them, he would marry him off to his sister, who was more beautiful than him.

Yakov Avinu implied with his words to Eisav that he merited all his great wealth because he constantly engaged in the study of the holy Torah. Therefore, he was blessed with such abundance. Yakov adds and says, “It is not worth it for you to hate me,” since if all your hatred toward me stems from the fact that I am laden with lots of money and possessions, you should know that it is not the money and riches which made me a prominent leader, but only my adherence to the Torah of Hashem and its mitzvot which brought it about. Therefore, there is no need to hate me, since my wealth does not pose a threat to you because my elevated rank and status are only results of engaging in Torah and do not stem from my material wealth.

My forefather, the tzaddik Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, zya”a, explained why he chose to call his books by names referring to money, such as “Kesef Nivchar” (special silver) and “Kesef Mezuak” (refined silver), because the nature of man is to love and desire money. There are only rare individuals who do not value money greatly. Since without money a person cannot exist in this world, he wanted to convey the message that a person should desire the holy Torah just as he desires money. Also, he wanted to instill in people's hearts that just like one cannot exist without money, he cannot exist without the holy Torah.

Thus, Rashi's two interpretations are actually one: Yakov Avinu kept the 613 mitzvot in the house of Lavan and did not become a minister and leader because of his money, but on the contrary, he achieved his lofty level only through the study of the holy Torah, and therefore, there was no need for Eisav to hate him.

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Hillulah of
Tzaddikim

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| 14 – Rabbi Mattityahu Gergi |
| 15 – Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi |
| 16 – Rabbi Shaul Yedidya Taub The Admor of Modzhitz |
| 17 – Rabbi Yosef Yoizel Horowitz |
| 18 – Rabbi Baruch of Mezhibiz |
| 19 – Rabbi Dov Ber The Maggid of Mezeritch |
| 20 – Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank |
| 21 – Rabbi Refael Bardugo |



Walking in their Ways

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

Tuned in to Teshuvah

A Torah-observant Jew approached me, and, with great enthusiasm cried out, "Rabbi David! You are my mentor! I always dreamed of meeting you, face-to-face. Baruch Hashem, I have now merited this honor!"

Since I didn't recognize the man, I asked him his name. But that, too, did not ring a bell. "How can you say that I am your mentor; I don't recognize you at all!"

He replied with this touching story:

Today, I look like a regular ben Torah. I try to represent the Torah community by behaving appropriately and sanctifying Hashem's Name through mitzvot. But just a few years ago, Torah and mitzvot were the farthest things from my mind. I didn't look like a Jew, and I didn't act like one.

Then, one fateful day, which would change my life forever, I took a cab, driven by a religious Jew. The driver asked if I would mind if he would listen to a recorded speech as we rode, as he was not allowed to listen to music at the time.

I agreed. The driver turned on a tape, and throughout the drive, we listened to your wonderful speech, directed at ba'alei teshuvah. You mentioned a case most similar to my own. Your words of inspiration penetrated my heart and brought me to thoughts of teshuvah.

I was very moved by the recording. As I alighted from the cab, I asked the driver if he would lend me the cassette. Unfortunately, he was unable to, but promised that he would send me a similar one, which he did.

I felt like a young child, listening to his first tape, over and over again. Each time, the message entered more deeply, bringing me to higher levels of teshuvah, until I was completely transformed into a bona fide ba'al teshuvah! This is why I consider you my Rav and mentor.

How tremendous is the power of one recording. Just by sitting in a taxi and listening to a speech, a person's neshamah can be tuned in to Torah and teshuvah.

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"The vision of Ovadiah"

(Ovadiah 1)

There are some Ashkenazim that read the haftarah: "And My people waver" (Hoshea 11)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah tells of the ceaseless hatred of Eisav to Yakov, as described extensively in our parashah, when Eisav came with four hundred men against Yakov.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

It is also forbidden to accept

Just as it is forbidden to accept Lashon Hara, even if it is told in front of the subject, so too is the law regarding Rechilut. For example, if a person relates Rechilut in front of the subject: "You spoke about him so and so;" even if the subject remains silent when the gossip is repeated about him, it is still forbidden to accept it. Even if his nature is not to remain silent about other matters, but in this case he is silent, nevertheless, it is not considered sufficient evidence to decide that it is true.



Words of Our Sages

Gems on the Parashah From the Torah Sages

The Yetzer Hara never tires

"And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn" (32:25)

Who is this "man" who wrestled with Yakov?

Chazal say that it was the guardian angel of Eisav (Rashi).

Yakov's struggle with Eisav's guardian angel never ceased, just his angel appears in the image of the Yetzer Hara and fights with us within our hearts. It constantly tries to conclude the battle in its favor. The Yetzer Hara never gives up, is not tired, and never needs a vacation. It works diligently 24/7!

The Admor of Ashlag describes this ongoing war according to the following story:

There was a Rosh Yeshiva who used to travel abroad from time to time to raise money for his yeshiva. Once he set out to a wealthy man who lived on the tenth floor of a large building. The Rosh Yeshiva did not want to use the elevator, so he climbed up to the tenth floor by foot.

When he reached the house of the wealthy man, he was informed that the wealthy man had already concluded dispensing charity for the day and distributed his tithes for the rest of the year...

Understandably, the Rosh Yeshiva was very dejected.

A year later, when he set out on his usual rounds, once again he went to the same wealthy man. Again he climbed up to the tenth floor, and again to his dismay he heard the same excuse that the wealthy man had concluded dispensing charity and already finished distributing his tithes for the year.

The next year, the story repeated itself, and likewise the following year, and also the one that followed...and so on for another seven years.

In the seventh year, when the wealthy man saw him climbing up the steps and entering his house puffing and breathless from his efforts, he told him: "I'm surprised at you, Rabbi, why you came upstairs again. Don't you realize that I do not want to give you money?"

"You know why I climbed upstairs?" answered the Rabbi, "Because you are not the first one to say this to me today... when I was downstairs the Yetzer Hara said to me: Why are you going up? Anyway he does not give you any money..."

"And why do you go up anyway?" the wealthy man inquired.

"Because I answered him that I learned this from him," the Rabbi explained. "After all, even two and three years ago he bothered coming and asking me why I'm going upstairs, but yet I went up. Nevertheless, he came back to me also this year... I told him: If you do not despair of me, I will also not despair of the wealthy man... and that is why I bothered to go upstairs!"



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

The mitzvah, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” is not just a “commendable” conduct or a “stringency” in halachah; it is an explicit mitzvah of the Torah (Vayikra 19:18): “You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

Let us try to imagine the great excitement that fills every person’s heart, and remember how we felt when we ate the matzah on the Leil Haseder. Thirty days before the chag we are busy with the preparations for the exciting moment when we will fulfill this mitzvah in all its details, according to halachah. We look for the most quality matzot, which were supervised from the time of the harvest, and were baked first in the oven, with all the stringencies one can imagine...

What about the mitzvah of the Four Species? Without question, religious Jews check the tip of the lulav, or the leaves of the hadas, in order that they should be extra specially perfect. No one is willing to forgo the most spotless etrog. People who scrimp and save on the most basic necessities, open their pockets wide when it comes to a special etrog that is most beautiful.

And what about the mitzvah of saying Shema, which we do twice a day at Shacharit and Ma’ariv? Do any of us allow this precious mitzvah to pass by without observing it in all its detail? G-d forbid! We all recite the first pasuk with intense concentration, pronouncing each word carefully.

There is no doubt. We all are meticulous in doing mitzvot. We all love the mitzvot and are extra careful in fulfilling them as best as we can, and even beyond that. However, for some reason, there is one mitzvah that is not honored as much as the others. It is a mitzvah, that not only are we not extra careful with it and do not anticipate it, but even sometimes forget it altogether...

This is the mitzvah written explicitly in the Torah (Vayikra 19:18): “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” It is a positive commandment, just like the blowing of the shofar, taking a lulav, building a sukkah, or eating matzah, and as we will explain later, this mitzvah is even more important! Yet, for some reason, it is not accorded the same reverence, the same excitement and awe like many other commandments...

This is clear evidence that the Yetzer Hara is at work here... For some reason, it strikes out an all-out-war with great vigor against this particular commandment, a lot more than it fights against other mitzvot, which seem to us important and special...

Particularly because of the vigorous battle of the Yetzer Hara against this specific mitzvah, it signifies to us how important this mitzvah is considered in Heaven. The Yetzer Hara would not bother to wage an all-out war if it wasn’t so critical! Is it not so?

Treasures

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



With Lavan I sojourned and the 613 mitzvot I observed

Yakov sent angels ahead of him to his brother Eisav, to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. And he commanded them saying, “So shall you say to my master to Eisav: Thus said your servant Yakov, ‘I have sojourned with Lavan, and I have tarried until now. And I have acquired oxen and donkeys, flocks, manservants, and maidservants, and I have sent to tell [this] to my master, to find favor in your eyes.’” (Bereishit 32:4-6)

Tzaddikim have no rest in this world. Yakov had not yet ended with his trials and tribulations, for he had only just parted from Lavan, and at once the wrath of Eisav sprung upon him. This was a different kind of trial, because Eisav was his blood brother. Yakov taught his righteous sons, not only must they distance themselves from Lavan, but also from Eisav his brother, even though this will cause war.

It is stated, “Yakov sent angels ahead of him to his brother Eisav.” Chazal debated (Bereishit Rabba 75:4) if they were real angels or messengers of flesh and blood. In any case, he sent messengers to inform Eisav that “I lived with the wicked Lavan, but I kept the 613 commandments, and I did not learn from his evil deeds.” What did he wish to convey with this? It seems that he wanted to inform him that this was his approach; even though he lived in Lavan’s house, he did not bond with him and did not learn from his corrupt ways, but kept his distance and constantly involved himself with the 613 mitzvot. He wanted to tell him that this was his approach and even from his brother he would distance himself in order to observe the mitzvot.

This is an important lesson for us. Yakov performed deeds that would be a portent for his progeny. He wanted to demonstrate how one behaves in such a challenging situation, and how to keep the flame of Bnei Yisrael from becoming extinguished; even in times of difficulties and crisis one must be aware not to succumb to the temptation of “letting Bnei Yisrael resemble the rest of the nations.” On the contrary, we must separate ourselves from the Gentiles and place a barrier between us, so that the flame of the Jewish people will continue to burn.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Patience in every situation

Yakov Avinu hears of the terrible tragedy in his family, but does not react with immediate anger. He remained silent until his sons came back from the field.

At the end of the late Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapira's life, when he was a very old man, he once had to travel on a long journey for an important matter, a trip that was difficult for a man his age. When he returned home late at night, a slightly deranged fellow suddenly entered his house. He began to bother Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Shapira with all kinds of strange questions about trivial matters, and Rabbi Moshe Shmuel answered every question with endless patience.

The members of the household could not bear the harassment and wanted to throw the man out of the house. But Rabbi Moshe Shmuel stopped them and said: "For us his questions seem trivial, but in this man's eyes they are of utmost importance."

Men of Faith

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

Once, while Rabbi Chaim Hakatan was walking through the streets collecting alms for the poor, he noticed R' Avraham Amar in the distance, looking extremely embarrassed. This was because he was in terrible financial straits. He did not even have a single coin in his pocket.

R' Avraham Amar was worried that Rabbi Chaim would approach him and ask him to donate money for the poor. Consequently, he quickly darted into one of the yards behind the houses.

Rabbi Chaim observed his actions from afar and followed him to the back yard. When he met him, he told him, "I know you don't have any money in your pocket. However, I would like to help you." While talking to him, Rabbi Chaim removed some coins from his kerchief and gave them to him. He told him, "Come to me on Sunday and return the coins that I am lending you. Then, you will have money to repay me."

R' Avraham's son, R' David Amar, personally describes what transpired. His father was worried that he would not be able to repay the loan, but Rabbi Chaim convinced him to take the money.

In the end, R' Avraham took the money from the benevolent tzaddik and went to the marketplace. There he purchased fish, meat, and other provisions in honor of Shabbat Kodesh.

The day after Shabbat, R' Avraham hesitated to leave his house. He did not have any money on him. He was worried about meeting Rabbi Chaim, since he did not have a way to repay the loan. After considering his predicament, R' Avraham strengthened his trust in Hashem and went out in the street.

While walking, an Arab, whom he had never seen before, approached him with an offer. He told him that he was a jeweler and was looking for people to market his merchandise. He proposed that R' Avraham should sell gold jewelry for him, and he would pay him handsomely for it. Moreover, he offered R' Avraham a substantial sum of money up front.

Immediately after handing him the money and jewels, the Arab disappeared without a trace. Just then, Rabbi Chaim appeared with a shining countenance and informed him, "Your eyes have beheld the fulfillment of my blessing to you. It is Sunday today, and now you can repay my loan. Do not give me one cent more."

R' Avraham repaid the exact sum that Rabbi Chaim had loaned him and was left with a large sum of money for himself as well.