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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Maskil LéDavid

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

The importance of learning mussar

"Korach the son of Izhar, the son of Kehat, the son of Levi took" [himself to one side] (Bamidbar 16:1)

It is not coincidence that the parashah of Korach is written in the Torah between the parashah of tzitzit and parashat Chukat. Regarding the parashah of tzitzit it is stated (Bamidbar 15:39), "When you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the L-rd to perform them," and in parashat Chukat it is written (Bamidbar 19:2-14), "This is the statute of the Torah... if a man dies in a tent." Chazal explain (Berachot 63b) "From where do we learn that words of Torah are firmly held by one who kills himself for it? Because it says, This is the Torah, when a man shall die in the tent." These are the two essential conditions in order to merit the crown of Torah: first, "When you see it," meaning a person must first see Hashem's existence and know His greatness; he must acknowledge His existence and remember all His commandments. And this is accomplished by contemplating the thread of techelet on the tzitzit, as Chazal state (Chulin 89a), "Blue resembles the color of the sea, and the sea resembles the color of the sky, and the sky resembles the color of a sapphire, and a sapphire resembles the color of the Throne of Glory."

Thus we see that when a person looks at his tzitzit, he remembers the greatness of Hashem, Who sits on the Throne of Glory, and consequently he also remembers His commandments. However, this is not sufficient, because generally speaking, when a person looks at his tzitzit, he does not feel that this affects or influences him. If so, how is the promise fulfilled that "You will remember all the commandments of the L-rd to perform them?" Therefore, Parashat Chukat follows, which states the requirement of another condition in accepting the Torah; that a person must sacrifice himself for the Torah, as Chazal explain, to "kill himself for it," and to humble himself before the Torah, subjugating all his desires and all his aspirations for the honor of the Torah. He must recognize his subservience to the Torah, and conduct himself with great humility toward it.

These are the two conditions which are connected to each other. Although the mitzvah of tzitzit teaches a person to remember the great-

ness of Hashem and recognize His Eminence, but on the other hand, one must also realize his subservience to the Torah and overcome all his negative attributes for the glory of the Torah. For even if he will recognize the Greatness of Hashem, if arrogance prevails within him, and he considers himself honorable, then surely he will not desire to remember the commandments of Hashem, which obligate him to subjugate his will. Therefore, together with the recognition of the Eminence of the Shechinah, a person must also lower himself and be humbled before the Torah and its scholars.

This was the mistake of Korach. He met the first condition, since he was one of the carriers of the Ark, and surely recognized Hashem's greatness. But on the other hand, he did not know how to humble himself and perceive the true deficiency, as a human-being of flesh and blood. He did not wish to fulfill the pasuk, "This is the statute of the Torah... if a man dies in a tent." It was difficult for him to kill his personal desires, and subjugate himself to the Torah and to Moshe, the Rabbi of the entire nation, because arrogance filled his heart. So he argued, "Why should only Moshe Rabbeinu lead, and not I?" Since he was lacking the virtue of humility, and did not subjugate himself before the Torah and before the leaders of the Torah, in the end he rebelled against the Torah and even denied Hashem, G-d forbid! If one denies and degrades a tzaddik, it is as if he rebelled against Hashem.

Thus parashat Korach was written between these two parshiyot, in order to teach us that this was Korach's error. One who wishes to merit the crown of Torah must also recognize the greatness of Hashem, and on the other hand, recognize his lowliness in comparison. Korach at first recognized the Eminence of Hashem, but he did not contemplate his lowliness in comparison, and fell spiritually so deeply.

Therefore, a person should be careful to straighten his ways, so that the sprout of the Torah within him should blossom and produce rich fruit, and he should not behave like Korach and his congregation, whose faulty traits caused his ultimate downfall, bringing him to the depths of destruction.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

3 - Rabbi Shneur Kotler Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood

4 - Rabbi Pinchas Halevi Horowitz of Nicholsburg Author of the "Hafala'ah"

5 - Rabbi Tzalach Cohen Zingi

6 - Rabbi Chaim De LaRosa Author of "Torat Chacham"

7 - Rabbi Simchah Bunim Alter The Admor of Gur

8 - Rabbi Chaim Mashash Author of "Nishmat Chaim"

9 - Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah Halberstam



Walking in their Ways

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

Funds of Faith

I was in need of a huge amount of funds in order to print one of my sifrei kodesh. At that time, a man came to me. He had been summoned to court for a difficult hearing. According to the natural order, he stood to lose the case and with it, a very large amount of money.

"If, B'ezrat Hashem, you are found innocent, will you be willing to offer a sizeable sum toward printing my sefer?" I asked.

"Certainly," was his immediate reply. "If I am found innocent, I am ready to donate half of the sum I would have otherwise lost."

From past experience, I know that people who pledge large amounts of money find it hard to keep their word when the time comes to back it up. Their Yetzer Hara does not allow them to part so easily with their hard-earned cash. Therefore, I told the man that I did not need half of the money. A few percentages of the earnings would be enough to cover the cost of the printing.

The man agreed immediately and, Baruch Hashem, was found innocent. As he had promised, he paid for the printing of Pachad David.

This took place about a week before the hilula of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a. The man arrived at the hilula celebration and, before everyone, caused his entire family to do teshuvah. This resulted in a tremendous kiddush Hashem.

If one believes fully in the merit of the tzadikim, and prays to Hashem in their merit, He sends their deliverance.



Words of our Sages

Perceiving his error

"And [if] the earth opens its mouth and swallows them and all that is theirs, and they descend alive into the grave, you will know that these men have provoked the L-rd" (Bamidbar 16:30)

Several commentaries address the obvious question; Why was Korach punished specifically by being swallowed in the ground?

Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz, zt"l, explains that Korach and his congregation mocked the logic of mitzvot: "Is it possible that a cloak of another [colored] material, one string of blue wool exempts it [from the obligation of techelet], and this one, which is made entirely of blue wool, should not exempt itself?"

What can this be compared to?

A truck driver who was carrying a large load of tires from place to place, entered the garage and asked to remove the tires from his truck, and he would continue traveling without them.

The owner of the garage questioned: "If I remove the tires from the truck, how will you travel?"

The driver replied:

"You fool! It is all the more so... if four wheels are enough to make a truck run, then how much more so if the entire truck is full of wheels. Why would it need an additional four wheels under it?"

Korach was a wise man. It is not possible that he intended to sound so foolish, so we need to understand what he was saying.

Korach argued against Moshe Rabbeinu: You say that Hashem wants us to be meticulous with the mitzvot to the last detail?! The end of the time to recite Kriyat Shema is a matter of fraction of minutes; the end of the time to recite the Blessing after the Meal is up to seventy-two minutes; Tefillin must be square...Why does Hashem need things to be so exact?!

Korach further argued: You claim that the thread of techelet is necessary in order to remind people of the sea, since the sea reminds people of the heavens, and the heavens of the Throne of Glory, as the Gemara explains (Menachot 43b). If so, a tallit that is entirely techelet, how much more so it reminds a person of all this very well... In other words, Korach's main argument was that there was no need for such extreme meticulous observance of the mitzvot!

Says Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz, zt"l, in his sefer "Tiferet Yonatan": Korach and his congregation began to argue about the logic of the mitzvot, but they did not know that the mitzvot are infinitely deep, and do not lend themselves to human logic. We cannot fathom the true logic of the mitzvot, and when we explain a reason for a mitzvah, it is only in order to give us a taste of its beauty, so that it should be more pleasant for us, since it is more enjoyable to perform a mitzvah when we understand its reason. But we should not mistakenly assume that we truly understand its depth and logic, because the mitzvot are expressions of Hashem's Will and His commands, and we do not possess the ability to comprehend their logic. Hashem's depth is beyond our logic.

Since Korach and his congregation argued that the mitzvot did not have such great depth, therefore, they were punished measure for measure, by descending into the depths of the earth. There, deep in the ground, they perhaps would begin to understand that the Torah is infinitely deep...

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week: "And Shmuel said"

(Shmuel I, 11:12)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah discusses how the nation demanded of Shmuel that he should appoint a king over them, and in the parashah we read how Korach rebelled against Moshe and sought leadership. Likewise, the haftarah states that Shmuel said: "Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken?" This is similar to the parashah, where Moshe says: "I have not taken even a single donkey of theirs".



Guard Your Tongue

Exercise your judgement

To praise a man in public is forbidden in any case, because at a large gathering there is bound to be extreme right-wing or left-wing or zealous people, and by mentioning his praise, they will begin to disparage him.

However, if a person judges that the listeners will not disparage him; for example, if they do not know him, then it is permissible to praise him, even in public, as long as he does not praise him excessively.



Chazak U'Baruch

The prevailing feeling is that correcting a sinful act is more difficult than eradicating an evil thought. However, Chazal determine (Yoma 29b), "Unchaste imagination is more injurious than the sin itself." We really need to clarify, how is it possible that a sinful thought, that was not acted upon, is more injurious than actively having committed the sin?

If we contemplate the words of Chazal, it is not difficult to understand. They did not say that "a sinful thought is more severe than an active sin," but only that they are "more injurious." For the sake of comparison, what is the difference between a hard root and a soft stem?

The latter is easy to break and uproot, while the first is hard to break and uproot.

Chazal are not referring to the punishment and severity, but to the consequences and damage. The act, of course, is more serious than contemplation of the act, but the damage, the temptation and agitation that sinful thoughts bring upon a person are more injurious. A sinful act is limited to a local act, which begins and concludes, but sinful thoughts occupy a person's mind constantly. They take root and it is extremely difficult to get rid of them, and they cause a person to be swept into places where he would never be able to physically reach. He also doesn't intentionally choose to be there. And if ultimately he will act upon his thoughts and physically get to that place, he will realize how far sinful pleasure was from what he had imagined.

It is brought in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov, zya"ra, that a man is in the place where his thoughts are. As a parable, Rabbi Zamir Cohen illustrated this point in the following way:

Let us imagine a Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Eretz Yisrael, and his grandson is getting married tonight in Yerushalayim. Everyone is happy and rejoicing, but he sits at the head table, drowning in grief. His thoughts carry him back to a different time, when he was in the valley of death. He again recalls what vicious human animals did to him, and his body trembles and shivers. Where is this person really? Is he at the joyous wedding in Yerushalayim, or in the Holocaust? In the Holocaust. Although his physical body is here, but he himself is not present. In contrast, a person sitting in prison imagines that he is sitting tranquilly on the beach side. Although his physical body is imprisoned, but he himself is in a different place, wherever his thoughts carry him.

Thoughts actually create reality. Aspiration and thoughts about doing good deeds shape a person's character to be a good and benevolent person in essence. Therefore, we see that a person who is deficient in honoring parents or guarding his eyes, changes for the better when he learns the laws of honoring parents or guarding his eyes. This is besides for the light of the Torah which illuminates and repairs his soul.

On the other hand, a person who contemplates sin constantly engages in corrupt thoughts over and over, and passion masters his heart, until it becomes an integral part of his character, even though he controls himself not to actively commit the sin.

Indeed, it is extremely difficult and almost impossible to fight thoughts. The best advice is to immediately distract himself to think of other things, and the most conducive thing is to contemplate and occupy his mind with words of Torah, as the Rambam states (Isurei Bi'ah 21:19), "If bad thoughts visit him, he should distract himself from corrupt thoughts to think of the words of Torah, which is most beloved and gracious." And when a person turns his attention to positive things, there will be no room in his mind for negative thoughts.

Treasures

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



Humbling ourselves before our leaders

Chazal say (Rashi, Bamidbar 16:7): "But what did Korach, who was astute, see [to commit] this folly? His vision deceived him." This signifies that a person was given two eyes; one of them is so that he would recognize the greatness of the A-lmighty, and the other one is so that he would perceive his lowliness in comparison and be humble.

Indeed, Korach knew to utilize the advantage of one of the eyes to recognize the greatness of Hashem. However, he made an error with the use of the other eye. He did not contemplate his own lowliness and limitations. He was not honest enough to humble himself before the holy Torah and before the leaders of the Jewish people. His arrogance got the better of him, which eventually destroyed him. This is the meaning of "His vision deceived him," since his arrogance stemmed from his vast wealth, which led him to believe that he was mighty, as Chazal warn (Pesachim 119a) "Riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt – This refers to Korach's wealth." He personifies what is stated (Devarim 32:15), "And Yeshurun became fat and rebelled." His wealth blinded him, and he attributed all his success to himself.

Unfortunately, many people do the same. When a person encounters misfortune, then he knows very well to turn to Hashem and cry to Him, and only then his fervent faith is aroused. However, when everything is going well, and he enjoys abundance from Above, then he forgets Hashem and turns his back on Him, because he credits all his successes in life to his own merit and declares, "I have earned it!" Regarding this the pasuk warns (Devarim 8:12-14), "Lest you eat and be sated, and build good houses and dwell therein,... and your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold increase...And your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, your G-d." Therefore, the Torah commands (ibid. 18), "But you must remember the L-rd your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth."

And this was the mistake of Korach. He attributed all his success and wealth to his own merit, as the pasuk states, "And your heart will become haughty and you will forget Hashem, your G-d... for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth." He did not recognize his inherent deficiency and thus failed to subjugate himself before the leaders of the generation, Moshe and Aharon. Therefore, he fell to such low depths and dared to open his mouth against Hashem and His messengers.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The gifts of the Kohen

In our parashah we read about the special mitzvah of the Kohen's gifts – when one slaughters an animal, then it is a mitzvah to give the Kohen the foreleg, cheeks and maw.

Rabbi Yosef Toledano related: There was a talmid chacham who was a Kohen and he used to travel around Morocco to inspire the people. In every place he would speak about three issues, and he would say the following:

Rabbotai! Hashem has granted me the privilege to be a Kohen, since I am a direct descendant through my fathers of Aharon the Kohen. What do I ask of you? I ask only what you are obligated to give me by law, which are three things:

Foreleg, cheek and maw.

“Foreleg” – (by a person this corresponds to his arm) lay Tefillin.

“Cheeks” – do not shave with a razor.

“Maw” – (lit. the stomach) do not fill it with foods that are not kosher.

Men of Faith

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

The Tzaddik's Reproof

On a winding and twisting mountainous road, a truck driver traveled with his friend from Agadir to Mogador.

The brakes of his truck were worn and not functioning properly. This was very dangerous, since if the truck would fall from the edge of the road, it would plunge into a deep chasm from a height of approximately five hundred meters.

Before the two set out on their way, they vowed that if the trip would go well, they would give tzedakah to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan.

In middle of the way, the driver lost control of the truck, and it plunged into the deep gulf. At the moment that they went over the edge, which spelled certain death, the two reiterated their vow that they had made, adding that if they would survive the fall they would bestow all their possessions to Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

A miracle occurred. The truck plunged over the edge and went crashing down into the abyss, but did not turn over. No harm befell the two passengers, and they emerged from the truck alive and intact.

The local Arabs who had witnessed the scene came running toward them and kissed their hands in absolute wonder because of the extraordinary miracle that had occurred. “You must be angels! How did you emerge alive from such a steep fall?”

The Arabs helped the two climb out of the valley and salvage their possessions from the truck. The two then continued on their way to Mogador.

When they arrived in Mogador, the two regretted the vow that they had made to give all their possessions

to Rabbi Chaim. They decided to suffice by giving him just a small sum.

One of them voiced his concern that perhaps Rabbi Chaim would perceive through Divine inspiration that they had vowed all their possessions to him. His friend reassured him saying, “If the tzaddik will reveal through Divine inspiration that we made a vow, then we will give him everything. However, if he is not aware of it, then we will not give him all our wealth.”

In Mogador, the two met with Rabbi Chaim, and he greeted them, “Peace and blessings.” They responded in kind. They gave him a small amount of money for tzedakah and continued on their way, winking to each other. They breathed a sigh of relief, “Baruch Hashem, Rabbi Chaim did not perceive the truth through Divine inspiration.”

Suddenly Rabbi Chaim turned to them and called reprovingly, “Are you not ashamed of yourselves? You bothered my grandfather to descend from the World of Truth to come save you! Instead of giving thanks and reciting the blessing of hagomel, you steal and refuse to keep your vow. Have you forgotten how the truck fell off the cliff, yet not one wheel was broken?”

When the two heard the tzaddik's reproof, they began to tremble in fear. They approached Rabbi Chaim in awe and humbly kissed his hands, begging his forgiveness.

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu commented about this incident, “The Rambam says that when Hashem spoke through the prophets, He would admonish the people through their own actions and words. Then they understood that it was Hashem speaking to them. Here, too, we can say that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was speaking through the mouth of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.”