

Re'eh

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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, shlita
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" a



Maskil LéDavid

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

When it is permissible to enjoy food

"And you should place your money with whatever your heart desires: cattle, sheep, wine, aged wine and all that your heart desires" (Devarim 14-26)

The Parsha is discussing Maaser Sheini. After a person has toiled strenuously in his field and finally sees the fruits of his labor, the Torah commands him to "Remove a tenth from all your yearly grain produce that your field produces" – he must take from his produce the tithe of Maaser Sheini and bring it up to the holy city of Yerushalayim and eat it there in holiness and purity. If however the quantity of produce is too large and it's difficult for him to transport it all the way to Jerusalem, he may redeem it for money and bring that money to Jerusalem where he will purchase food and drink. The Torah explains in great detail what he should buy, "And you should replace the value back onto whatever your heart desires: cattle, sheep, wine, aged wine and all that your heart desires". This means that he is permitted and even required to indulge in the food to his heart's content, to eat with great appetite and pleasure.

This is difficult to understand, since it is certainly not the way of the Torah. The Torah generally requires a person to refrain from indulgence and worldly pleasures, lest he become too involved in them and find himself drawn in after them. We find this in the Mishnah in Avot (6-4): "This is the way of the Torah; eat bread dipped in salt, drink water in measure and sleep on the ground and live a life of discomfort; and delve into the torah..."

This was the holy way of the tzaddikim of the previous generations. I vividly recall my father, my teacher and master HaRav Moshe Aaron Pinto zatzal, who lived his entire life in abstinence and kept far away from the pleasures of this world. He was extremely careful not to indulge in tasty foods, he was satisfied with dry bread and plain water. On occasion he would even lower his dignity and eat only the remains of the previous meal... because that is the correct path through which one can reach high levels in Torah and Avodat Hashem.

And suddenly here in this parsha the Torah seems to remove all restraint and explicitly instructs us to indulge in the most sumptuous of foods and drink. It seems that the Torah specifically wants the person to consume his Maaser Sheini produce with great enjoyment and pleasure. The question is, why? What happened suddenly to the qualities of restraint and abstinence that the Torah so values?

If a farmer sees Hashem's blessing in his fields and produces a bountiful and healthy crop, his Maaser Sheini will be proportionally large and he will have an abundance of food to eat and enjoy in Jerusalem. He will even have food left over to share amongst

the poor of the city. But therein lies a significant spiritual danger – when he sees all his wealth and abundance laid out before him, he could fall into the trap of thinking "It is my strength and the power of my hands that has made for me all this wealth..." – he has essentially forgotten G-d. That is why the Torah emphasizes here in Devarim (14-26) "And you should eat before Hashem your G-d and you and your family should be happy." All the happiness that you derive from eating the Maaser Sheini should be in honour of Hashem Yitbarach and not chalila to increase your own honor in the eyes of others. The purpose of the eating should be solely to pay tribute to Hashem. And whilst he is eating he should place the Shechina at the forefront of his mind: "Shivisi Hashem L'neggdi Tamid – I will place Hashem before me constantly" – then he is truly fulfilling the words 'And you shall eat it before Hashem' – all his eating is only for His honor and glory.

A person must remember constantly that all the blessings and bounty he enjoys comes only by the grace and kindness of Hashem Yitbarach; as such there is nothing for him to be conceited about. "It is Hashem Your G-d who has given you the strength to achieve".

And if indeed he merited eating the Maaser Sheini in holiness and purity, with the Shechina at the forefront of his mind and with all the correct intentions that his utter and total objective is to honor Hashem and not to boost his own status in the eyes of others, then all this eating – with all the indulgence and pleasure involved, not only does it not bring him down spiritually but on the contrary, it brings him to an extremely high level of kedusha – comparable to that of partaking from the holy sacrifices in the Beit Hamikdash!

Through this he will merit to continue to grow spiritually and reach even higher levels of purity, and the more he indulges in this holy form of eating, the higher he will be elevated in ruchniyot. Because this is not mere physical eating that nourishes the body, but a holy and spiritual eating for Hashem's honor that nourishes the soul and purifies the body. That is why the Torah permitted and even required eating the Maaser Sheini food with such indulgence and pleasure.

For the same reason, a person may indulge and eat more on the Shabbat and festivals than he is accustomed to, because this eating is also considered a 'holy eating' – as though he is eating from the sacrifices in the Beit Hamikdash! The extra food and drink we enjoy on Shabbat and festivals is a great Mitzvah, so long as it is eaten with the correct kavnot and thoughts that this is all for the sake of Heaven and for His Honor and glory.



Chevrat Pinto NYC

207 West 78th Street • New York NY 10024 • U.S.A
Tel: +1 212 721 0230 • Fax: +1 212 721 0195
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jerusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israel
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orot 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israel
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Ha'im

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israel
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hillulah of Tzaddikim

30 - Rabbi Yehuda Lavi The Rabbi
of Tripoli

1 - Rabbi Shmuel De Avila

2 - Rabbi Aharon Hassun

3 - Rabbi Eliyahu Monsoni A
disciple of the Dhr Hachaim
Hakadosh

4 - Rabbi Meir Simchah Hacohen
The author of "Dhr Same'ach"

5 - The saintly Rabbi Moshe Aharon
Pinto, zya" a

6 - Rabbi Naim ben Eliyahu



Walking in their Ways

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

The plan of Hashem is everlasting

During one of my frequent visits to Mexico, a local resident by the name of Mr. Bergman invited me to visit him at his home. He was so determined that I come that he even assured me he would kosher his kitchen. When I finally consented he was overjoyed, and he invited a couple of his friends to come as well, amongst them a number of non-Jews.

At the conclusion of my visit, just as I was about to leave, Mr. Bergman requested a blessing in the merit of my holy ancestors. One of his close friends, a non-Jewish lawyer, also asked for a blessing for success. After blessing my host and his friends, I turned to the lawyer and asked him, "Where are you intending to travel tomorrow?" He told me that he intends to fly to Los Angeles. I said to him, "Don't travel tomorrow. In fact, don't travel anywhere, just stay here in Mexico".

I have no idea what possessed me to ask him about his travel plans, or why I told him not to travel. The words left my mouth so suddenly that it must have been the words of G-d.

The lawyer heeded my instructions and stayed put, which was surely orchestrated from Above just in order to create a Kidush Hashem.

The next day at around the time that the lawyer was supposed to have boarded his flight, he suffered a massive heart attack and was rushed to the local hospital. In the intensive care unit the doctors were able to stabilize him and save his life.

Whilst recovering in the hospital he told his doctor that he was really supposed to have been on the way to LA at the time of the heart attack, and the only reason he wasn't on that flight was because of the advice of the Rabbi at the party he had attended in his Jewish friend's house the previous day.

Hearing this, the doctor, also a non-Jew, turned to his patient and said, "I don't know how that Jewish Rabbi knew to warn you not to fly, but you should know that if you would have had the heart attack mid-flight you would have never survived! Go thank the Rabbi who saved your life, it was his advice that saved you'...

This incident created a huge Kiddush Hashem, and when the lawyer came to thank me, I told him that whatever I advised him to do at the time was purely a heavenly inspiration, and that I don't even know why it suddenly entered my mind to advise him not to travel....

On occasion Hashem wants to show the nations of the world that there is a G-d running the universe, so He demonstrates His wonders in a clear manner. And since He wants to show them also who is the Chosen Nation, He performs these wonders in a way that the Jewish people will be uplifted in the eyes of the nations of the world.

The Haftarah

This weeks' Haftarah is **'Aniya se'ara lo nechama'** (Yeshayahu 50:4) "... no comfort"

Connection to this Shabbat: This Haftarah portion is one of the seven portions we read over these seven 'Shabbatot of Consolation', beginning on the first Shabbat following Tisha B'av. The Haftarah contains words of comfort to the Jewish nation over the loss of the Beit Hamikdash.

In Ashkenazic communities they will read the Haftarah 'Hashamayim Kisi'- as this Shabbat will also be Rosh Chodesh. Some Sephardic communities will read the standard weekly Haftarah and then add the first and last pasuk of the Haftarah of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh.



Guard Your Tongue

It all depends on habit

Perfection of speech and character takes much practice and discipline. If we look around us, we will see that the reason why Lashon Hara is so prevalent nowadays is because people have gotten used to from a very young age to uninhibited speech – they say whatever they want, with no restraint whatsoever. It never crosses their mind that they may be saying many things that are forbidden.



Words of our Sages

Charity saves from death

"Naton Titein; You shall certainly give" (Devarim 15-10)

The Jewish nation is the 'am segula', a nation of segulot- we search all over for successful segulot. A quick peruse of the current newspapers will attest to the power of these segulot and their influence on people. The Chafetz Chaim however writes in his sefer Ahavat Chessed that many people the world over search for segulot in order to merit salvations and worthy offspring, and they don't realize that the most simple and successful segula is the Mitzvah of Tzedaka.

Besides for being the exalted Mitzvah that it is, and the huge reward that awaits the giver in the World to Come, the Mitzvah of Tzedaka serves as the greatest guarantee for untold blessings in all areas of life.

The Chafetz Chaim related a remarkable story that he witnessed with his own eyes:

There was a person whose children all passed away at a young age. The heartbroken father went to a Chacham to ask advice and receive a segula. The Chacham (some say this was the Chafetz Chaim himself, although he never said so explicitly..) advised the petitioner: "I don't know much about segulot. But I advise you to set up a gemach, a free loan fund, to assist people in need and in the merit of the chessed you do to your fellow Jews Hashem will deal b'chedsed with you and give you healthy children".

The person wisely heeded this advice and set up a gemach whereby he lent money to the needy in exchange for collateral that they deposited by him. In order that the gemach be maintained in an orderly manner, he had a list of rules drawn up, and one of these rules was that every three years on Parashat Mishpatim, the parsha where we read "If you will lend money .." everyone would gather for a Seuda, a festive meal, to strengthen the ideals and goals of the Gemach.

Three years passed, and wonder of wonders, the founder of the Gemach merited to hold a healthy newborn son, whose brit was held exactly on the day that had been dedicated for the gemach-seuda!

He continued running the gemach, with perhaps even more vigor, and over the years he was blessed with more sons. However, as the years went on he forgot the tremendous kindness Hashem had done to him and his responsibilities grew heavier. He came once again before

the Chacham with a request: The Gemach was growing and required much time and resources, perhaps he should appoint a manager to run the gemach instead of him.

The Chacham advised him against this, saying that there was no one else as suitable as him to run this worthy endeavor. But a few years later the man came once again to the Chacham and pleaded with him to be allowed to delegate the heavy responsibility of running the gemach. The Chacham finally acquiesced and they chose another person to be in charge of this great Mitzva.

The very next morning, the man appeared at the door of his Rav broken and grief stricken, with the terrible news that during the night one of his children had choked and strangled to death...

He begged the Chacham to allow him to be reinstated as the manager of the gemach.

So clearly evident was it that in the merit of the Mitzvah of Chessed he bore children, and when he ceased his charitable activities the Midat Hadin took over and took away the children. The merit of Tzedaka stands by a person and protects him from harm, and removes evil decrees in a way that defies the laws of nature.



Chazak U'Baruch

The month of Elul is at our doorstep, these are days of mercy and supplication as we prepare for the approaching Day of Judgment, the day we will cry out and beg our Creator: 'Inscribe us for a good life, all the sons of your covenant!'

Rav Eizik Sher Zatzal explained that in order to merit 'a good life' in this world we have to keep those Mitzvot that specifically we eat its fruit in this world – such as Chessed, kindness. Of particular power is Chessed Shel Emmet, true kindness, which is the type of kindness where the giver doesn't expect anything in return. A kindness where the recipient doesn't know that any kindness was done to him. Such Chessed is termed 'Chessed for the sake of Chessed', and it is through this that a person can earn himself a 'good life'.

During the month of Elul there was a notice hung up on the front door of the Talmud Torah, which read as follows: "A king's rulership is established only when his servants are united in serving Him, so the way to achieve 'shetamlichuni Aleichem' (you shall crown me King over you) is to form a united front. It is incumbent upon us to accept on ourselves that the entire year we will busy ourselves with loving our fellow. And that is how we will crown Hashem king. Let none of us say this is too difficult, because when a person gets involved in various ideas [of chessed] it will slowly become easier, and especially if one follows the path [presented in the book] Tomer Devorah."

Rav Simchah Zissel of Kelm told his students during the final semester of the Talmud Torah in Grubin, that the main Avoda of the approaching month of Elul is to make efforts to tolerate even those with outlooks and opinions differing greatly from our own. "This is our prime obligation this Elul" he instructed.

In a discourse presented by Maran Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Ahron Leib Steinman, zatzal, during the days of Selichot, he mentioned that it is Hashem's desire that each individual arrives at Rosh Hashana with the recognition that Hashem is king and that he wants to serve Him. The words 'vetamlichuni aleichem' (crown me king over you) means we must resolve to think our every thought through the prism of the Torah, whether in matters between us and our fellow man or between us and Hashem.

If we would stand back and observe the quarrels and fights going on around us, what are they fighting about? Why is it worth their while, what do they gain from it? Don't they realize that for every 'Vitur' (concession to the other) they would reap enormous gains, as Chazal tell us 'One who goes against his natural tendencies of character Hashem will remove all his sins'. And who amongst us would say we don't need atonement... for there is no such thing in this world as a perfect Tzadik who has never sinned...

Those who stubbornly stand firm and insist on their rights, not giving in an inch, what do they gain? One must constantly 'weigh the loss of a Mitzvah against its reward, and the reward of a sin against its losses'. When we think along those lines we will see right away when the calculation is not quite right. One must accept the yoke of Heaven in all matters – and when a person makes the correct cheshbonot he will only stand to gain, and perhaps even be saved from dispute, slander or gossip and other types of sins.. it is an unlimited gain. That is how a person should crown Hashem king over himself, and he will merit a good year.

Treasures

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



Kin'at Sofrim - constructive envy - of Moshe Rabbeinu

"Re'eh Anochi noten lifnechem hayom.." "See, that I am presenting before you today, a blessing and a curse" (Devarim 11-26).

This verse requires clarification. Why does Moshe tell them that they should 'see' the blessing and curse, surely these are not physical objects that can be seen?

I want to suggest with Hashem's help, the following answer. Moshe was saying to the people "Re'eh Anochi" – "Look at me!" See what lofty heights I have attained, and all because I cleave to our holy Torah. See what exalted heights a person can reach – to merit speaking with the Shechina face to face, and ascending on High and basking in the presence of angels for forty days and nights.. the pinnacle of all spiritual achievements. And all because I adhered to the holy torah and kept the will of Hashem. If so, it is worthwhile for you to follow this path and cleave to Hashem and His holy Torah!"

It is self-understood that there was not the slightest element of haughtiness in his words G-d forbid; Moshe Rabbeinu a'h was only a few days away from death and we know that 'there is no sovereignty on the day of death' – it is a time when there is no room in a person's heart for thoughts of pride. As such Moshe was able to speak his own praises and he told them, "look at me," let the people think about his exalted spiritual levels and be jealous of the deeds and actions that led to these heights. This is what our sages teach us: "Kinat sofrim tarbeh chochma" - jealousy of the learned increases knowledge (Bava Batra 21a).

In addition, Moshe was telling them, "Look at me. Even with all I have achieved in my life and all the merits I have amassed, in the end the angel of death will still rule over me". David Hamelech expressed this sentiment too in Tehillim 89:49- "Which great man will live and not see death?" For every man there is an end. Our teacher Moshe told his people, that even despite all his achievements, in the end he too will depart from the world and stand before the Heavenly tribunal to account for his deeds. Let them not live with the mistaken assumption that a person lives in this world forever; they must remember that their end will come and to hurry to prepare provisions for the way- provisions of Torah and good deeds, for their gold and silver will not accompany them. It is only Torah and Mitzvot that will stand in our merit on the final Day of Judgment.



Men of Faith

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



This is dedicated on the occasion of the Hilulah of the Gaon and Tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zatzal.

Exalted levels of Avodat Hashem were attained by the Tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, the son of the holy Tzaddik Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto II and the father of our teacher Rabbi David Chananya Pinto Shlita.

Rebbi Moshe Ahron absorbed many holy customs from the home of his illustrious parents, and he guarded them zealously. His piety expressed itself in that he was strict about following the advice of Chazal in Mishnayot Avot. The Gemara in Bava Kama (30a) tells us; "One who would like to behave with piousness should follow the instructions and advice mentioned in Mishnayot Avot." Indeed, any instruction that left the mouths of the holy Tanna'im he fulfilled with utmost precision.

Take for example the motto of Rebbi Levitus of Yavneh, "One should behave with extreme humility." Every Shabbat when Rav Moshe Ahron entered the synagogue, he would bend over very steeply like one who is trying to lower himself upon entering a king's palace. When people would approach him to kiss his hand and receive his blessing, he would shudder just from the idea that someone should kiss his hand as if he was a special person, and he would vehemently object.

In general the humility with which Rav Moshe Ahron conducted himself was projected upon all those who came within his four Amot. Everyone could feel that they

were in the presence of a person a cut above the general populace; on the one hand he was 'head and shoulders' above them, but on the other hand he lowered himself to feel the pain of others. Every person who entered his home at any time of the day or night was received graciously and treated like the Tzelleim Elokim that he was. He had a unique custom that he would rise as a sign of honor for every single person who entered his room, whether young or old. Many a time he was asked about this unusual practice, especially when rising for people many years his junior, and he explained that, "It is important for people to know that every single person has G-dliness within him and I give honor to that internal holiness." This is similar to the Mishnah in Avot (4-20) that teaches us not to look at the jug only at the wine inside it.

Many a Talmid Chacham and Rav was overwhelmed by his humility when they

saw how the Tzaddik would subjugate his complete essence in front of learned Torah scholars. When they would come to him to seek his blessing Rebbi Moshe Ahron would initiate the greeting with a Shalom Aleichem and with extreme alacrity he would draw his hand back so that no one would kiss it (as is usually the custom amongst the Sephardic communities).

When they would beg him to pray for them, his face would show explicit signs of reluctance as if the responsibility was far beyond his level. He would reply to the Talmidei Cahchamim; "who am I and what am I worth that I should merit blessing all of you, on the contrary, you the Talmidei Chachamim and B'nei Torah who dwell in the tent of Torah are the source of all blessing. Chazal have already taught us that one who studies torah diligently, Hashem fulfills his desires and causes all his suffering to cease.

