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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

The Ideal Setting for Growing in Learning

"Then Hashem said to Noach, "Come to the Ark, you and all your household, for it is you that I have seen to be righteous before Me in this generation". (Bereishit 7:1)

The Ba'alei HaMussar tell us that a yeshiva is the most ideal shelter for protection from any spiritual dangers. They compare the yeshiva to the Ark that Noach was told to build, which protected him and his family from the waters of the Flood.

Even though, in general, a yeshiva safeguards its students from the dangers that are rampant outside the walls of the Beit Midrash, if a talmid doesn't understand the purpose of being in Yeshiva and he learns Torah as if it is something he is being forced to do, without enthusiasm or eagerness, then he is in even greater danger. Not only does he not grow spiritually, but he quickly descends to a very low place. In a yeshiva setting there is no such thing as staying in the same place. Either one expends effort and progresses, or one falls, rachmana litzlan. A student who doesn't make the most of his yeshiva days, can become, lehavdil, like a wild animal who strews destruction in its path. By not learning Torah he harms not only himself, but is an existential danger for all the students with whom he comes into contact.

When one returns to Yeshiva after vacation, the withdrawal from the outside world is very hard. At home a bachur gets used to eating good food, he is exposed to various things that are outside the realm of halachah, and he studies much less. Because of this, returning to yeshiva after a long stay at home is difficult and demands a great deal of inner strength. I remember when I was sent to learn in a Yeshiva in France when I was just ten years old. I didn't see my family for an entire seven years. I then returned to my home in Morocco to be reunited with my family whom I hadn't seen in all this time. After a short time, I went back to my Yeshiva in France, but taking leave of my family was exceptionally hard for me and I was filled with a strong urge to leave the Yeshiva and return home. This was due to the fact that while being at home I had grown accustomed to being pampered by my family and taking things easy.

My Rebbe, the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Shmuel Lopian zt"l, talked to me compassionately and persuaded me to stay in Yeshiva. During that term in yeshiva they started learning a sugya which interested me and drew my focus back into the beit midrash. If not for the encouragement of my Rebbe, and the sugya that I felt so connected to, who knows where I would be today and what I would be doing.

It once happened that I greatly desired to encourage a certain person who was a ger tzedek, but had neglected the Torah and mitzvot. This ger lived in France and came to the bet haknesset (in Israel) on Simchat Torah, the second day of Yom Tov for those

who live in Chutz La'aretz. I was extremely happy to see this ger and I gave him the honor of holding a Sefer Torah. To my surprise he didn't reject me, but started to dance around with the Sefer Torah with great excitement and devotion. When I noticed his enthusiasm I told him that the main thing is not to dance with the Sefer but to observe its commandments. I spoke to him in detail about the mitzva of Shabbat, the obligation to rest on the seventh day. After Simchat Torah he returned to his home in France and I didn't see him for a long time. One day he came to visit me in Yerushalayim, where I once again encouraged him and persuaded him to keep Shabbat. To my delight I heard that he had accepted my words and had taken it upon himself to keep Shabbat in its entirety.

This story ended in a moving way, but there are other stories, and not just a few, where a person is aware of his mistakes but remains just as he is and doesn't try to correct his behavior. It is the same with a yeshiva bachur; either he strives to reach higher levels in Torah and yirat shamayim, or he feels content with his status and then his animal instincts take over and cause damage to his ruchaniyut. Every bachur who comes to yeshiva needs to come with the desire and goal to grow and bring additional holiness to Hashem's Name.

A person must constantly think of ways in which he can grow and help others to grow with him. Before a plane takes off into the air, it journeys for a short time on the runway and only afterwards lifts off. The take-off is also done gradually and slowly. Similarly, a yeshiva bachur doesn't grow and become greater in one leap but very slowly, one stage after the next, because Avodat Hashem is hard and demands great investment and effort, and only constant work over a long period of time bears fruit and then one sees success. And just like a plane cannot abruptly stop, and if it does it will blow up with all its passengers, so too with Avodat Hashem one cannot suddenly stop, because a standstill like this swings a person off the correct path, and makes him fall to the depths.

A bachur who comes to yeshiva at the beginning of the term is filled with great excitement and his heart is full of good intentions to grow in Torah and yirat shamayim. But every ben Torah must be careful, that just like he starts off the term in yeshiva with excitement and eagerness, when it comes time to leave he must take this enthusiasm with him. Only then can the great spiritual growth that he achieved when he was in yeshiva, accompany him even during bein hazamanim, when he returns home. May it be Hashem's will that He open our hearts to His Torah and put in our hearts love for Him and fear of Him.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

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| 4 - Rabbi Eliyahu Sarim |
| 5 - Rabbi Moshe Birdugo |
| 6 - Rabbi Yehuda the Chassid |
| 7 - Rabbi Meir Shapiro of Lublin |
| 8 - Rabbi Nachum of Horodna |
| 9 - Rabbeinu Asher ben Yechiel (The Rosh) |
| 10 - Rabbi Rafael Ahron ben Shimon, author of 'Nahar Mitzrayim' |



Walking in their Ways

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

A Discovery of Note

I once desperately needed a certain phone number which I had copied onto a memo note. I searched all over for the paper, but could not find it anywhere. I looked in every nook and cranny, but the note was nowhere to be found.

After some time, I instinctively put my hand into my pocket. I felt a scrap of paper. Imagine my surprise when I withdrew my hand with the memo note in it.

As I analyzed the situation of how the note reached my hand exactly when it was meant to, I realized that everything is in Hashem's hands. When He does not want me to find a specific item, I can turn over heaven and earth to no avail. Just as soon as He deems it timely, I will, without any effort at all, find what I was missing.

A similar incident occurred to my wife. She could not remember where she had placed a one thousand euro note which she had in her hand. She looked high and low, but could not fathom where the money had gone. It seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

I truly wanted to help my wife find the money. I made up my mind that I would fortify myself with emunah, and Hashem would guide me to the money. Without forethought, my feet carried me to a certain spot, where we never thought of looking. There lay the money, ready and waiting for a taker.

I am 100% sure that my stalwart faith in Hashem that He would direct me to the missing money is what eventually led me to its location. All searches were for naught. The money was found in the least likely place, *bisiyata di'Shemaya*.

The Haftarah

"Sing out, O barren one who has not given birth" (Yeshaya 54:1)

The connection to the Parsha: The main topic of Parshat Noach is the Flood and Yeshaya's prophecy includes a reference to the Flood. "For like the waters of Noach this shall be to Me". Ashkenazim continue reading the Haftarah with the following verses **"O afflicted, storm-tossed one..."**



Guard Your Tongue

Hashem's Beloved

If by keeping quiet a person will not lose money but he may suffer embarrassment, it is certainly forbidden to speak up. Nevertheless he shouldn't be concerned about the humiliation at all. He should know that because of this he will be considered one of Hashem's loved ones and his face will shine like the light of the sun, as Chazal tell us, "Those who are offended and don't insult, bear their disgrace and don't reply, concerning them the verse says, "and let those who love Him be like the powerfully rising sun".



Words of our Sages

When the King Himself is a Thief

"And the earth had become filled with robbery" (Bereishit 6:12)

There is a difference of opinion among Chazal in the gemarah (Babba Kama 62a) on the explanation of the word 'robbery'. Is a robber a person who forces another to sell him a certain object against his wish, or does it refer to someone who steals less than the value of a prutah, with a thief being one who steals an object that is worth more than a prutah?

The question is asked: If the Flood was a result of people stealing items worth less than a prutah, for which one cannot be called to a din Torah, and all that was left for the store owner to do was to cry out "robber!", then why was the owner included in the punishment? The answer is that even though in his store he was the one who was robbed, he himself used to steal items worth less than a prutah in other stores...

The Ben Ish-Chai zya"l, tells a story about a robber who was apprehended and the king sentenced him to death. Before the decree was carried out, the robber asked to say a few words. He was granted permission and said: "I admit my sin and accept the decree, but I want to say one thing – I possess a unique formula, and I am scared that if I am killed, the secret will go with me to the grave. Therefore I would like to reveal it to you".

"You speak well," said the king, "What is your formula?"

The convict answered: "I know how to take the pit of a fruit, cook it with certain spices and place it in the ground, and after a few minutes a beautiful fruit tree starts to grow"!

The king was impressed and asked the convict to demonstrate this wondrous thing. The robber asked for the necessary items and then began his preparations.

When the mixture was ready the robber announced that it must be put into the ground by someone who never stole in his life, not even one prutah, and not even in his youth. "I", he apologized, "cannot do this, but maybe the Deputy can..." The Deputy paled and said with an apologetic smile that when he was a young boy he thinks he stole a marble from a friend...

"Maybe the Treasurer can be honored to place the mixture in the ground?" asked the robber, but the Treasurer refused: "It would be a shame to destroy the formula with my hands, I am involved with money all the time, and who knows...I suggest giving the honor to the Minister of Education"...

And so it went from minister to minister, until the robber suggested that the king himself take the honor!

The king shifted his weight uneasily and said: "When I was a child I took a diamond necklace from my father without permission; it is not a good idea that I should be the one to do this!"

The robber turned to the king and said, "The Deputy is guilty, the Treasurer and various other ministers also cannot prove their complete innocence, even the king himself is not untainted, therefore why am I being singled out to be punished in this way?!"...

This was the situation in the world during the Generation of the Flood – the ones who cried out 'robber', the ones who complained that people were stealing from them, were the ones who robbed others with their own hands...



Pearls of the Parshah

Forward Focus

“Noach walked with G-d” (Bereishit 6:9)

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim zya”a, in his sefer “Od Yosef Chai” (Parshat Lech Lecha), explains that angels are referred to as ‘standing’, as it says (Zechariah 3:7) “Then I will grant you strides among those [angels] who stand here”. Angels always remain in place – they neither progress nor decline spiritually, for they do not possess an evil inclination and cannot decide whether to do good or bad. They stand still. But righteous people are always progressing from strength to strength, overcoming their evil inclination and ascending to an even higher level.

This is what the verse is referring to by telling us that “Noach walked with G-d”. He did not perceive himself as ‘standing’ – as having arrived at the pinnacle of achievement, but as ‘walking’. He understood that the way ahead was still far off and continually strived to reach the level of a true servant of Hashem.

The Why of Wings

“And behold! An olive leaf it had plucked with its bill!” (Bereishit 8:11)

On the verse in Tehillim (55:7) “O that I had a wing like the dove! I would fly off and find rest!” we can ask several questions: Why did David HaMelech yearn specifically for wings of a dove? Where did he wish to fly to? Where did he wish to rest?

The sefer ‘Podeh Nafshi’ quotes the Midrash who asks, where did the dove bring the olive leaf from? Rav Bibi answers: “The Gates of Gan Eden opened for the dove and from there it brought the leaf”.

This is the idea that David HaMelech is expressing: “O that I had a wings like a dove” – like that very dove that Noach sent out of the Ark and it entered Gan Eden. But, stresses David HaMelech a”h, I will not make the same mistake as that dove who went into Gan Eden and came out, but “I will fly off and find rest” – I will stay and dwell in Gan Eden...

Dangerous Vegetables

“But flesh; with its soul its blood you shall not eat” (Bereishit 9:4)

The Chida in his sefer “Nachal Kedumim” writes, “But flesh, with its soul its blood you shall not eat” – flesh that a person puts his life in danger in order to attain, one should not eat, for example meat that was acquired through theft, or meat that a person put his life in danger to acquire.

We find an example of this with David

HaMelech who did not want to drink the water that the three mighty men risked their lives to obtain for him, and referred to the water as blood: “Is this not [tantamount to] the blood of the men who risked their lives to go” (Shmuel II 23:17).

Rabbi Shlomo Levenstein shlita, told over that in the last shmitta year when the intifada was raging, one of the veteran mashgichim, who used to go in and out of the Arab villages checking and supervising the vegetables that grew there, was wounded by a terrorist.

One of the Gedolei Yisrael refused to eat from those vegetables and explained: “They are not vegetables, they are blood!” To back up his words he cited the explanation of the ‘Nachal Kedumim’ on the verse “But flesh; with its soul its blood you shall not eat”

The Blessing that was not Recited in the Ark

“And to Ever were born two sons: the name of the first was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided” (Bereishit 10:25)

Chazal established a special blessing to be recited on seeing an elephant or a monkey - ‘Meshaneh habriyot’, (‘who makes the creatures different’)- “since they are similar to man in a few ways” (Berachot 58b and Meiri).

This special blessing of ‘meshaneh habriyot’ cannot be understand according to the literal meaning - “strange creatures”, for why is an elephant different to a camel who has strange humps? Isn’t every creature created with its unique form and characteristics? Why is it appropriate to refer to them as strange or different? Each animal was created in its own unique way specific to that creature. And why are these two animals singled out?

The sefer ‘Emet L’Ya’akov’ explains this idea according to the gemarah that tells us that some of the people from the generation of the Dispersion were punished by being transformed into elephants and monkeys. Now we can understand why we pronounce the blessing ‘meshaneh habriyot’ on these specific species, since they were originally human beings who were turned into animals!

It could be that this is the reason why some Rishonim permit a monkey to wash a person’s hands, for originally a monkey was a human being.

Treasures

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



Noach and the Raven

“He sent out the raven, and it kept going and returning until the waters dried from upon the earth.” (Bereishit 8:7)

We learn a fundamental lesson from the story of the raven. The Midrash writes (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit 8,58) “And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noach opened the window of the Ark which he had made. He sent out the raven...” The raven did not want to go and Noach said to him, what benefit does the world have from you? You are not fitting to be eaten as food, you are not fitting to be offered as a sacrifice, therefore go on your mission otherwise you will succumb outside the Ark and Noach did not want to accept him back into the Ark. Hashem told Noach to allow him to return since the world will need him in the future when Eliyahu will be told to hide in the brook and will need the help of the raven to supply him with food, and indeed Noach allowed him back into the Ark.

This Midrash is puzzling. The Admor of Zanz zt”l questions why Hashem allowed the raven to return to the Ark? Why did He not tell him to complete this mission as well as his future one?

It is well known that one angel cannot perform two assignments (Bereishit Rabba 50:2). This refers to an angel, but not to a human being. A person can be wrapped in tefillin and at the same time wear a tallit, learn Torah and fulfill many mitzvot.

Why is this? Hashem created a person with enormous power which enables him to perform many mitzvot simultaneously. For example, an onlooker thinks that a person who is sitting and learning Torah is just learning Torah, but he might not realize that this person enjoys the merit of, and is partner to, thousands of mitzvot, for it is in his merit that at this present time the world exists. As it says, “If My covenant with the night and with the day would not be; had I not set up the laws of heaven and earth” (Yirmiya 33:25). The world exists only in the merit of Torah learning, therefore anyone who is alive at this time and performs mitzvot, it is to his credit.

This is what Hashem was telling Noach: Accept the raven back into the Ark since he is not a human being and is not destined to carry out multiple tasks. It is enough for us that he will fulfill his mission at the time of Eliyahu HaNavi and it is not necessary that he should do so also now. There is no reason to accuse him for refusing to go since he does not need to perform more than one mission.

This is a fundamental lesson for us. We human beings constantly need to remember that we have great power; to the extent that we possess the ability to influence the existence of the world! We have to understand this responsibility and put much thought into the time we spend learning Torah and to appreciate the repercussions of our learning.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Shatterproof Glass

“Now the earth had become corrupt before G-d; and the earth had become filled with robbery. (Bereishit 6:11)

We have a tradition in the name of Rabbi Chaim Volozhin zt”l, that money that is untainted by even the slightest possibility of theft, will be completely safe. Thieves will have no power over this money and no damage will be caused. This idea was brought to life in a story that happened in the house of Rabbi Chaim.

A group of askanim went to visit Rabbi Chaim in order to discuss a certain matter and ask for his advice. A Jew from their kehillah unfortunately sinned, fell very low and became an informer. The askanim told Rabbi Chaim that recently this person had denounced them in an even greater way and caused them serious damage.

As they were sitting and pouring out their hearts, the tablecloth was accidentally pulled to the ground, and with a great noise all the glassware fell to the floor. The guests were embarrassed and dismayed; who knows what damage they had inadvertently caused Rabbi Chaim? But even before they grasped what had happened Rabbi Chaim calmed them down: “Don’t worry, my friends, I am certain that not even one dish broke. These dishes are protected from any harm, because they were bought with kosher money”.

A quick check of all the glassware showed that Rabbi Chaim was correct. He then told them, “Not for nothing did this happen just now, that the tablecloth was pulled and the dishes fell, it is nothing more than a message for you, maybe an answer to your problem. If your money was acquired in a totally honest way, you have no reason to worry that the informer will cause you harm. Just like what happened over here, so too the informer, with his tale bearing, will not have any power to make you lose money that was rightfully gained.



Men of Faith

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

The Missing Bracelet

One day, when Mrs. Rachel Deri returned to her house, she was met with calamity. Her golden bracelet, which was worth fifty thousand francs, had been stolen. She had hidden it in a safe place, but it was gone.

From bits and pieces of information which she gathered from her acquaintances, she discovered that it was her neighbor who had stolen her bracelet.

Despairingly, Mrs. Deri turned to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan and asked him for advice how to get her bracelet back. She gave the Rav a sum of money for tzedakah and in addition donated oil for the Rav’s lamp and requested a blessing.

“Go home,” the Rav instructed her, “and tell all your neighbors that you were by me, and that I told you that the one who stole the bracelet will not live out this year. He will die within the year, and then his heirs will have to return the stolen object.”

Mrs. Deri went home and did just as the Rav instructed her. She told her neighbors exactly what Rabbi Chaim had said. The words, naturally, reached the ears of the neighbor who had stolen the bracelet. The woman feared for her life and hurried to return the stolen bracelet to its owner. Cunningly, she threw the bracelet into Mrs. Deri’s room and then exclaimed, “Look! The bracelet is there in your room...”

After she returned the bracelet, the neighbor did teshuvah. She left her errant ways and became a faithful Jew.

Profitable Income in the Merit of Prayer

R’ Mordechai Knafo told the following miracle that happened in the merit of the tzaddik:

He had a wine shop in the city of Tiznit. It was risky business to sell wine in Morocco, since Arabs were prohibited by their religion to drink alcohol. Therefore, the only customers were the French, and there were not many French people around.

Fights erupted frequently between the drunks at the shop, causing R’ Knafo a lot of problems. He was so troubled that he decided to go Mogador with his friend, R’ Yisrael Cohen, to the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and pray that in his merit, the police should somehow close the store.

His prayers were fully answered. That week, the police announced that they would close the store, since the French people had already left the city, and there was no one left to buy wine...

When the police arrived with a warrant, R’ Knafo fell to his knees in front of them and pleaded, “You are taking away my livelihood! Why are you closing my shop? How will I earn an income?”

R’ Yisrael Cohen, who was present at the time, expressed his surprise, “Why are you crying? After all, you yourself prayed that the police should come and close the store. Since you prayed for it, your prayers were accepted!”

Afterward, R’ Knafo moved to Casablanca, where he established another business. Baruch Hashem, he was very successful in his new venture.