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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 Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta

**MASKIL LEDAVID**

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

To Warn the Older Ones Concerning the Younger Ones

"Hashem said to Moshe: Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and tell them: Each of you shall not contaminate himself to a [dead] person among his people" (Vayikra 21:1)

Rashi explains: "Say and tell, to warn the older about the younger."

Rashi has a question: Why is there a double expression of "say...and tell", could the verse not have been understood without the addition of "and tell them"? Therefore, Rashi explains that besides telling the sons of Aaron to take care concerning contamination from a dead body, there is also an additional 'telling' here: The older Kohanim, above the age of thirteen, should warn also the younger Kohanim, not to contaminate themselves by a dead body.

These words of Rashi impart an important lesson for us. When we are trying to educate the young ones – lesser in wisdom- to come closer to Hashem, we should also teach them how to be enthusiastic in our avodat Hashem. When we are guiding the youth as to the correct path in life, we must cultivate and nurture them with a clear and consistent message, and not behave in a way that contradicts the ideas that we wish to impart to them.

We find an example of this (Shemot 4:20-26) when Hashem commanded Moshe to return to Mitzrayim and tell Pharaoh to allow the Bnei Yisrael to leave Egypt. The verse informs us: "So Moshe took his wife and sons, mounted them on the donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt...It was on the way, in the lodging, that Hashem encountered him and sought to kill him. So Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and touched it to his feet; and she said, "You caused my bridegroom's bloodshed!"

In the Gemarah (Nedarim 31b), we find a difference of opinion among the Tana'im. "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha says: Circumcision is so great, for all the merits that Moshe Rabbeinu possessed did not help him when he was negligent with milah. Rabbi Yosi is of the opinion that far be it to say that Moshe was negligent with milah, but this is what he said: "I will circumcise and then go." The infant is in danger for the first three days after circumcision. "Should I circumcise and wait three days?" But Hashem commanded me, 'Go, return to Egypt'. So why was he punished? Because he occupied himself first with the lodgings."

This gives rise to a question: If Moshe Rabbeinu had a doubt whether to circumcise his son Eliezer or not, was he not the 'faithful shepherd', the master of all prophets? He could have simply turned to Hashem and asked him what to do – to remain in Midian and circumcise his child or leave right away?

The answer is that Moshe Rabbeinu came to the conclusion that he had remained in Midian long enough. He had pleaded with Hashem for seven days about his reluctance to go and redeem the Bnei Yisrael, and then Hashem commanded him – "Go, return to Mitzrayim." With this command, Moshe derived that there was no room for further delay and he was supposed to postpone his son's circumcision.

But the objection against him was- once he arrived in Mitzrayim, why did he begin making arrangements for his lodgings? Instead of initially concerning himself with this, he should have immediately gone to Pharaoh and fulfilled Hashem's command without delay. At this point the angel came and wanted to swallow him like a snake. As long as Moshe was still on the way and had not yet arrived, there was no claim against him why he had not yet circumcised his son. But as soon as he arrived at an inn and started occupying himself with other things, this, as if, was a contradiction to his reasoning.

When Eliezer grows up and Moshe explains to him why he did not circumcise him at the appropriate time, it will be a lesson for his son about the correct time to fulfill Hashem's wish. But after this message was contradicted by a different act, through Moshe delaying and concerning himself with accommodations and not going straight to Pharaoh, now he will be seen as contradicting himself- in certain circumstances he behaves in one way and at a different time in a different manner.

This is something most penetrating. We don't find that Hashem commanded Moshe to take his wife and children with him, and the proof is that when Aaron met Moshe, he asked him – "Who are these with you? He answered him, my wife and child. He said to him, on those who are already (in Egypt) we are distressed, (that they are enslaved), and you are coming and adding to them? Moshe heard and sent Zipporah together with his children, back to Midian."

From here we can derive that he was not explicitly commanded to bring them, and even though he brought them on his own accord, the angel did not come to seize him for not circumcising his son on time, for as long as Moshe Rabbeinu's reasoning was that he had to hurry to fulfill Hashem's command of "Go, return to Egypt" – then he was forgiven for delaying the circumcision of his son, for 'one who is occupied with a mitzva is exempt from performing a different mitzva'. Only once his occupation with the lodgings contradicted this, immediately "Hashem encountered him and sought to kill him". This is a powerful lesson for us.

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13 – Rabbi Ya'akov Meir Shechter Author of Zimrat Yesha

14 – Rabbi Yehuda Bar Ilai

15 – Rabbi Aryeh Leib Shapira

16 – Rabbi Chai Taib Lo Met

17 – Rabbi Yechezkel HaLevi Landau, author of 'Noda B'Yehuda'

18 – Rabbi Moshe Isserliss

19 – Rabbi Ezra Attia, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Porat Yosef'



Walking in their Ways

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

Love for a Child; Love for Hashem

When I was once receiving the public in New York, a woman came to me, together with all her children. This woman, bli ayin hara, was the mother of a large family, and when she was already older, about twelve years ago, Hashem blessed her with another son. She was delighted with this son of her old age. Now when she came to me, I noticed that this youngest child was not present, so I asked her about him.

She immediately burst out crying and told me that this precious child, the apple of her eye, passed away one day in his sleep.

I remembered that once she had asked me to bless this child but to my distress I didn't have the chance to do so. The mother pulled herself together and said that she understands that his death is an atonement and she believes that "Hashem gave and Hashem took"; she is certainly not questioning Hashem's ways. On the contrary, she asked me what she could do for Hashem's honor, something that could be a merit for her son.

I told her that since this son did not merit laying tefillin, maybe she can

make this a merit for him. I suggested that she buy a pair of tefillin for a Bar Mitzva boy who cannot afford the expense. Right then and there she opened her purse and presented me with two thousand dollars for buying the tefillin.

I was so impressed with this woman. She was a poor woman with no means, and it could well be that the amount that she donated was the sum of all her savings. In addition, even though Hashem had taken her beautiful child, she had no complaints and accepted the decree with love. She even wished to honor Hashem and buy an expensive pair of tefillin, in order to give someone the merit of this mitzva.

How can a person attain this level?

Only if during one's entire life, one serves Hashem with tremendous willingness and inner passion; if one does not perform the mitzvot out of habit, instead one serves the Creator with alacrity and rejoices in His mitzvot and desires to perform them. This kind of person, even when he comes across challenging times, chalilah, will accept it with love and will thank Hashem in all circumstances, with the clear knowledge that this is the will of Hashem.



Words of our Sages

Where is Gehinom?

"The seventh day is a day of complete rest" (Vayikra 23:3)

A person performs mitzvot yet has no conception of what is awaiting him in the World to Come as a reward for fulfilling Hashem's command. Would we know what we receive for just one mitzva, what a heavenly light will envelop us because of this deed, we would take great care not to overlook any opportunity.

The Gaon Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin zt"l, writes in his commentary on Masechet Avot, that the inspiration that a person feels after fulfilling a mitzva, is actually a feeling of closeness to Hashem which he experiences now in this world. This closeness to Hashem awakens in us the desire to perform more mitzvot, more Torah study, more kindness. All of this is besides the reward that he will receive in the World to Come. Here, in this world, he already has Gan Eden. These are the words of the holy Gaon: "The reward for a mitzva is the mitzva itself that is given to him as a reward, and that is the light that surrounds him...and he sits as if he is in Gan Eden, and then it is easier for him to perform additional mitzvot."

"Every Shabbat", the Gaon Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Ohr Hachaim', tells over, "we host secular students. After Shabbat I ask them: 'How did you feel on Shabbat?' And this is their remarkable answer: 'Gan Eden'."

I am not sure that they know what Gan Eden is, but they are right!"

On Shabbat, we are treated to a taste of the heavenly Gan Eden. These students spend the entire Shabbat listening to Torah discourses, Midrashim and stories. There is good food and spirited singing. The reward of their mitzva is another mitzva that they are able to perform, and these mitzvot give them a sublime pleasure and a feeling of closeness to the Creator.

The opposite is also true – when a person transgresses a commandment, he is surrounded with an impure spirit which causes him to transgress further, as Rabbi Chaim Volozhin continues: "And the opposite, G-d forbid, holds true with a sin; he is holding on to cords of contempt, and one sin leads to another."

This concept shows itself clearly in life:

A person sins in some way, and immediately following this, an argument breaks out in his home. The gehinom that he experiences in his home is the outcome of his sin. A person thinks, I sinned, but I am done with it. This is not the case. The gehinom remains with him. He gets no pleasure from what he did, he cannot feel close to Hashem. There is a divide between him and Hashem.

In addition, even when he performs a mitzva, it does not bring him any pleasure. All around him he hears people saying: "I felt great pleasure from my praying." "The learning today was so pleasurable." But he is unfortunate and doesn't understand what they are talking about; he is convinced that there is something wrong with him. This is not the case, it is simply the sin that has caused a rift; "The consequence of an aveirah – is another aveirah", and he is unable to experience the pleasure of closeness to Hashem.

The Haftarah

"But the Kohanim, the Levites, descendants of Tzadok" (Yechezkel 44)

The connection to the parsha: The haftara mentions the laws pertaining to the holiness of the Kohanim, according to the instructions of Yechezkel HaNavi. This is also the topic in this week's parsha, where the holy conduct required of the children of Aaron HaKohen, is discussed.

Guard Your Tongue

Search for a Merit

According to the Torah law, one is forbidden to believe a negative report told about one's friend. Similarly, even if one knows that the facts are true, but it is possible to interpret the story in different ways, even though the one relating the story judges him negatively and thereby condemns him, it is clear that the one who hears this information is obligated to find a way to judge him positively.

One who transgresses this obligation and agrees with the negative interpretation of the account, has not only transgressed, "With righteousness shall you judge your fellow", but he is also considered as having accepted lashon hara. Through refraining from judging him positively, he automatically believes the negative account.



Pearls of the Parshah

Speech that Awakens Longing and Mercy

“Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron” (Vayikra 21:1)

The Ohr Hachaim HaKadosh zya”a asks, (a powerful question that is actually relevant to the entire Torah), wherever the verse says “Speak to the Bnei Yisrael”, it would seem sufficient to say “speak to them”. It is obvious that the intention is to speak to “the Bnei Yisrael”, for they were the ones to whom the mitzvot were given?

The Ohr HaChaim zya”a answers, that although it seems redundant, Hashem repeats their name time after time.

This can be compared to a father who has a beloved son. He is always talking about him, and when he tells him to eat or drink, he uses a loving expression, “eat, my child”, “drink, my child”. This, too, is the manner with which Hashem behaves with Am Yisrael, who are his children, and constantly repeats their name, out of His love for them.

We also find this idea expressed by the words of Yirmiyahu HaNavi, “Is Ephraim My favorite son or a delightful child, that whenever I speak of him I remember him more and more? Therefore, My inner self yearns for him; I will surely take pity on him – the word of Hashem.” This shows us that the actual mentioning of Yisrael’s name before Him, awakens His mercy, which then awakens an even stronger love for us.

Anger Drives Away Wisdom

“They shall not make a bald spot on their heads, and they shall not shave an edge of their beard; and in their flesh they shall not cut a gash” (Vayikra 21:5)

The ‘Ben Ish Chai zya”a tells us that since Kohanim are quick to become angry, the Torah brings this verse to warn them particularly about the trait of anger.

Chazal have told us (Pesachim 66b): Any person who becomes angry, if he is clever – his wisdom withdraws from him”. Where is wisdom found? In a person’s head. Therefore the Kohanim were warned, “They shall not make a bald spot on their heads” – don’t get angry so that wisdom should not withdraw from your heads.

On a fast day, even people who are generally calm – become more irritable, and there is therefore a particular need to warn people not to become angry on fast days.

The above verse hints to this idea. If you take the word ‘רָקַל’ (beard) – the letter preceding ‘zayin’ is ‘vav’; the letter preceding ‘kuf’ is ‘tzadik’ and the letter preceding ‘nun’ is ‘mem’. These three letters spell ‘מוצ’ (fast). The Torah says, “They shall not make a bald spot” – the Kohanim must not get angry, so that they shouldn’t lose their wisdom as a result of their anger. “...an edge of their beard” – the side of the beard, the letters preceding the letters of ‘רָקַל’, which spell the word ‘tzom’ – “they shall not shave”.

And above all this “in their flesh they shall not cut a gash” – they must take care of their health and not become angry.

Lineage Demands Caution

“You shall not desecrate My Holy Name” (Vayikra 22:32)

When someone would approach Rabbi Hillel Zaks zt”l for a bracha, due to the fact that he was a grandson the Chafetz Chaim, this is how he would reply: “My being the grandson of the Chafetz Chaim is of no value – but for this: Since people look at it as an advantage, this behooves me to be more cautious than others with chilul Hashem. Since more is expected of me I can be punished more than others.”

This is the message that Rabbi Hillel zt”l passed on to his children. He would tell them that it is not worth talking about their yichus (lineage), since if their friends are familiar with the fact that they are descendants of the Chafetz Chaim and they stumble G-d forbid with lashon hara or different sins, their sin is much greater – for there is more chilul Hashem involved.

In Our Fathers Footsteps

Nuggets of guidance culled from the teachings of Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, on masechet Avot



“Torah study is good together with an occupation, for the exertion of them both makes sin forgotten. All Torah study that is not joined with work will cease in the end, and leads to sin”

(Avot 2:2)

Rabbeinu Ovadiah M’Bartenurah offers the following interpretation of this mishna: A person could question that since one’s toil should always be in Torah and exerting oneself in this makes sin forgotten, so why is an occupation necessary? Therefore, the mishna had to say that any Torah study that doesn’t come together with an occupation, in the end will cease, for a person cannot manage without sustenance and in the end he will steal from others and forget his learning.

One can add to this that the intention of the Tanna when he said “All Torah study that is not joined with work will cease in the end”, was that a person should not say, I will separate my years- part for Hashem and part for work, and I will start by being involved with parnassah. Once I amass a large amount of money, I will leave my business and go and sit and learn in the Beit Midrash. To counter this idea, Hillel says (ibid. 4) “Do not say, ‘When I am free I will study,’ for perhaps you will not become free.” A person is required to fix set times for study and set times for working every day, and shouldn’t separate them from each other, for if he does not do so, neither one will last.”

A person must always be careful not to alter the times. He must take care not to occupy himself with business during the time that he has set aside for Torah study, for the Tanna did not say that Torah study is good and an occupation is good, but it says that Torah study is good together with an occupation, implying that each one assists the other- and not that one disturbs the other.



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'
In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

"Her husband's heart relies on her and he shall lack no fortune"

A woman's role entails many responsibilities - she is the cook and the one who nurtures, advises and listens with an open heart; she does the laundry and sometimes also assists with the parnassah; she is both an occupational and speech therapist.

But we must remember that the most important part of her role is "Her husband's heart relies on her", with the climax being - "Distinctive in the councils is her husband, when he sits with the elders of the land." If, no matter what she is occupied with, these verses stand in the forefront of her mind, then she is fitting to be praised with the song that the wisest of all men, Shlomo Hamelech, composed.

Where Is the Store? I did not know...

The Torah knowledge of the wife of Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein zt"l, was exceptional even by the standards of women of previous generations. Hashem blessed her with extraordinary talent, and with her great abilities she towered high above in an unbelievable way.

Every day after many hours of arduous work in the market, the Rabbanit Epstein would sit and delve into holy works. Her husband, the author of "Aruch HaShulchan", was the Rav of Novhardok; his face shone with the wisdom of Hashem and he had the appearance of a king. His diligence in Torah study was exceptional - to the extent that he refused to accept respectable positions out of fear that this might take him away from his intense Torah study.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel attested that his wife, the Rabbanit, was the one who supported and encouraged him to grow in Torah, without letting up.

When the Rabbanit passed away, not for nothing did her husband, in his emotionally charged state, choose to praise her by saying:

"For thirty years my wife, the Rabbanit, managed a store, and I didn't even know it's location..."

So great was her love for Torah that she never disturbed her husband from learning the Torah that was so beloved to them both.

Rabbi Yechiel Michel added that to this one can apply the verse "Her husband's heart relies on her and he shall lack no fortune". Implying that because the Rabbanit took responsibility for all the needs of the home from beginning to end, and he was able to devote himself to Torah study without any concerns, he merited 'spoil' - for the Torah is called 'spoil' as it says, "I rejoice over Your word, like one who finds abundant spoils".

In our generation too, we merited to see a live example of this. The Rabbanit Margalit Yosef, the righteous wife of the Rishon L'Tzion, Rabbeinu Ovadiah Yosef zt"l, right from the start of her marriage took upon herself the entire management of the household from a financial and educational perspective, all in order so that her diligent husband shouldn't be distracted from learning Torah. Even when it was necessary to take the children for medical treatment and other similar things, she didn't think twice and did what she knew how to do, for the sake of the holy Torah.

After she passed away, her husband, Maran the Rishon L'Tzion zt"l cried bitterly and praised her dignified personality and upright middot by telling over the following: "When I would receive my wages as Dayan or Chief Rabbi, I would give her the money, and tell her, 'Take what you want, and if there is change give it back to me.' I never once asked her for the change! I knew how righteous and loyal she was."