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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon 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 Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Yissachar's Wise Advice

"It was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the Tabernacle that he anointed it, sanctified it and all its utensils, and the Altar and all its utensils, and he had anointed and sanctified them. The leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' household, brought offerings; they were the leaders of the tribes, they were those who stand at the countings. They brought their offering before Hashem: six covered wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for each two leaders and an ox for each and they brought them before the Tabernacle."

(Bamidbar 7:1-3)

Rashi writes: "Rabbi Natan asks, what brought the leaders to donate here (the dedication of the Mizbeach) at the outset, whereas with the building of the Mishkan they did not bring a donation right away. Because the leaders said: "the congregation will offer whatever they offer and whatever is missing we will complete". When they saw that the congregation completed everything as it says "But the materials were more than enough for all the work that had to be done" (Shemot 36:7), they said "now what is left for us to do?" So, they brought the shoham stones and the stones for the settings for the Ephod and the Breastplate. That is why with the dedication of the Mizbeach they were the first to present their donation."

Since the leaders realized that they were not sufficiently quick in donating for the Tabernacle, here they pushed themselves and were the first to bring a donation. They brought six covered wagons that would be used to carry the Tabernacle and its vessels when they travelled from place to place.

Who was the one who advised them to bring these wagons?

The Midrash tells us that it was the tribe of Yissachar who gave this advice and they were rewarded by being the second tribe to bring their offering, following the tribe of Yehuda. Rashi asks: "Why did Yissachar merit this? One reason given is that they were learned in Torah, as it says, "And of the sons of Yissachar, those who had an understanding of the times, to know what Israel should do." (Divrei Hayamim I 12:32). A second reason is that they were the ones who advised the leaders to bring these offerings." At first Moshe Rabbeinu a"h was reluctant to accept the leaders' offerings, until Hashem commanded him "Take from them," implying that he should accept this donation.

In order to understand this well, we have to contemplate the great loftiness of the receiving of the Torah, which took place on the holy day of Shavuot. It is well known that the main acceptance of Torah is achieved through toiling in it and the main area of toil is in the Oral Law. Although the Written Law, which contains the

six hundred and thirteen commandments, was given to us by Hashem, He concealed mounds of laws within each commandment. This is the Oral Law within which we must toil and exert ourselves in order to derive these conclusions from within the Written Law.

Now it is clear why Hashem did not command them to bring wagons. Hashem intended that this law should be an aspect of the Oral Law, meaning that the Bnei Yisrael should weigh up and discuss how it would be possible to carry the Tabernacle on all the journeys without wagons. This deliberation will lead them to understand that it is Hashem's wish that they prepare wagons. This is exactly what the tribe of Yissachar did, they, being known as Torah scholars, were the ones who derived this law. Certainly, had they not introduced this idea, Hashem would have commanded it. But Hashem kept it concealed in order that the tribe of Yissachar should exert themselves and develop this understanding.

Hashem's delight with Yissachar's advice, is expressed by Chazal who tell us (Midrash Rabba Nasso 12) that those twelve oxen that the leaders donated on the advice of Yissachar, remained alive until the days of King Shlomo a"h, when he offered them as sacrifices. There is a Braitha in the name of Rabbi Meir that is of the opinion that they are still in existence today and did not become disfigured nor grow old as it says "and they shall be to perform the work of the Tent of Meeting," (Bamidbar 7:5). "And they shall be" is in the future tense to teach you the extent to which Hashem rejoices with a person who toils and exerts himself to understand the Torah and derives practical laws from his efforts. That is why Hashem commanded Moshe "Take from them," I desire this donation that came about through the advice of Yissachar and it is the true intention of the Torah. This idea is hinted to in the word "סַתְּמָם" ("Take from them"), which contains the same letters as the word "תַּמָּא" (truth), plus the letter 'מ' which refers to the fact that the Torah, the Truth, was given in forty ('מ') days. Yissachar's understanding is indeed a Torah truth and this Torah brings Me pleasure.

The practical lesson that we should take from this is that just as the Bnei Yisrael set up the Tabernacle, so every person must establish his own personal Tabernacle by devoting himself in the toil of Torah and exerting himself to achieve it. He should strive with sincerity and this is the only way to merit tranquillity and pleasure in the Next World, for only one who toils on Erev Shabbat will have what to eat on Shabbat. But one who does not toil in Torah in this world, will certainly not merit tranquillity and pleasure in the world which is entirely good. Therefore it is our obligation to toil in the Holy Torah with all our strength, with all our 248 limbs and 365 sinews, and through this we will merit that Hashem will be pleased with us and we will merit all the blessings which are written in the Torah, Amen.

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Hilula

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13 - Rabbi Ya'akov Mutzafi

14 - Rabbi Nissim Yagen

15 - Rabbi Yedidya Rafael
Abulapiah

16 - Rabbi Sasson Levi

17 - Rabbi Aharon of Karlin

18 - Rabbi Yerucham Lebovitz



Walking in their Ways

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

All Are Equal in Hashem's Eyes

Someone once came to me with a request for a blessing. He told me that he has three daughters of marriageable age, but has no means of offering a suitable dowry for even one of them. In addition, they live in a rented apartment and do not possess a house of their own.

When I asked him if he would like financial assistance, he replied that he does not want to take charity, rather he just came to ask for advice and for a blessing that Hashem should open the Gates of Heaven for him and he should merit Divine assistance.

I mentioned to him that he has a very wealthy neighbor who would certainly be able to help him. He replied that Hashem is the One who blessed this neighbor with success and besides this, he also invests great effort in his business. I do not wish to take charity; I trust in Hashem that He can provide for me...

When I heard these pure words of faith, I was amazed at his good-heartedness. He showed no jealousy of another person's blessings, even though he himself had very little. I told him that I am certain that in the merit of his complete faith and benevolent spirit Hashem will bless him lavishly so that he will have the means to marry off his daughters. There is no need for him to worry, for Hashem has thousands of ways to meet a person's needs.

This is the reason why the Parsha of Nasso is read around the time of the festival of Shavuot, either just before or after. A person must know that the main merit of acquiring Torah is through being particular about his middot and correcting his ways between himself and his fellow man. This is the only way for him to elevate himself in the ways of Hashem.

We must take a lesson from Hashem, how He raises and elevates the tribes to count them and afford honor to their families, and does not belittle, G-d forbid, even one tribe, for all are equal in his eyes. Hashem was concerned about showing respect to the family of Gershon even though their role was not as important as the family of Kehat. The Torah details them and there are verses written about them.

If Hashem respects and honors the tribe of Levi for serving in the Beit Hamikdash, even though in actual fact it is an honor for them that they were chosen to work in the Mishkan, but nevertheless Hashem appreciates it, all the more so we should realize the extent to which we must respect and elevate others and consider each and every person as precious. This is the only way to merit receiving the Torah for "Love your fellow as yourself is a fundamental rule of the Torah".

The Haftarah

"There was a certain man" (Shoftim 13:2)

The connection to the parsha: The haftarah speaks about Shimshon the Nazirite and the instructions that the Navi gave his mother concerning the abstention. The parsha also talks about the laws of the Nazirite.

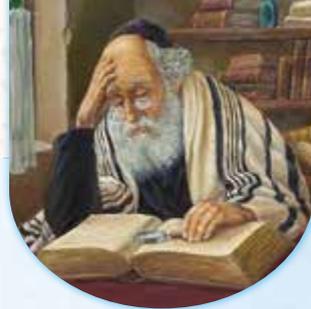


Guard Your Tongue

Regret and Commitment For the Future

A person who transgresses by listening to lashon hara and believing it, must rectify his sin by working on himself to rid his heart of these words until he no longer believes them.

He should also accept upon himself for the future, not to accept lashon hara about any Jewish person. He should admit his wrongdoing and through this he will rectify the transgressions that he violated by accepting lashon hara.



Words of our Sages

Who Are the Sons of Gershon?

"Take a census of the sons of Gershon, as well, according to their fathers' household, according to their families"

(Bamidbar 4:22)

We must understand what the Torah is coming to teach us by saying "as well, according to their fathers' household". Would we consider not counting the family of Gershon? All the tribes were counted, so why should Gershon not be counted too?

Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, the Rosh Yeshiva of 'Ohr Hachaim', offers a wonderful explanation. He says that the sons of Gershon are an intimation to those who have left the path and divorced themselves from Torah and mitzvot and have been driven away from their Father's table.

The Torah commands us: Do not push them away and alienate them, on the contrary, "Take a census of the sons of Gershon", elevate them and bring them closer to their Father in Heaven.

What is the reason behind this approach? To answer this, the verse adds, "as well, according to their fathers' household". Even if they themselves are not following the correct path, they are descendants of a holy lineage. Their fathers and forefathers were righteous; all of them are sons of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov.

The 'Ohr HaChaim' yeshiva held a convention in honour of Shavuot, which was attended by yeshiva students from all over the country. One of the yeshiva's avreichim, well versed in Torah and halacha, told over his personal story:

Despite being brought up in a place bereft of Torah observance, with no trace of religion having any effect on his upbringing, deep in his heart he always felt some inkling of faith. However, he was clueless as to how to put this into practice in his daily life. He served as an officer in the Israeli army during the Second Lebanese War. During this time he experienced great miracles and clearly saw Hashem's Divine intervention personally watching over him.

...Then came the turning point. "I entered the gates of 'Ohr HaChaim' and was greeted with an overwhelming sight: the Beit Midrash was full of hundreds of yeshiva students who were learning with great tumult. What intensity! The roar of Torah that rose up in the Beit Midrash was mightier than a hundred tanks engaged in battle. With Hashem's kindness I started learning in yeshiva and merited growing in Torah. I feel that every moment that I am in yeshiva is a greater miracle than all the miracles that I experienced in the army. I feel that Hashem is holding my hand at every step of the way."

If we stop and ask ourselves, how did these precious avreichim merit achieving such lofty levels? There is no doubt that it is in the merit of their fathers. Their ancestors were certainly great tzaddikim; who knows, maybe they are descendants of the Rambam, Maran the Beit Yosef or the Holy Ari zt"l?

Their holy ancestors are observing them from Gan Eden and advocating for them. They are the ones who are lighting up their souls and kindling the spark of holiness that is hidden deep inside them.

The soul of a Jew is hewn from under the Heavenly Throne. His fathers and forefathers are looking down at him from above, in concern for his soul. Even one who has distanced himself from them and has become an aspect of 'the sons of Gershon', we have a mitzva to raise him up, to elevate him and bring him closer to the Rock from which he was hewn, to our Father in Heaven.



Pearls of the Parshah

A Personal Blessing

“So shall you bless the Children of Israel” (Bamidbar 6:23)

Why does the verse start in the plural: “So shall you bless – the Children of Israel – saying to them” and afterwards, in the wording of the blessings, the verse continues in the singular: “May Hashem bless you and safeguard you. May Hashem illuminate His countenance for you...”?

The sefer ‘Dan M’Daniel’ offers an interesting explanation: Not every blessing is suitable to be said in the plural, for blessings can mean different things for different people.

For example “May Hashem bless you” – refers either to ‘with money’ or ‘with children’. Money is something that can be a blessing for one person, yet for his friend it can be a curse, the money destroys him and deflects him from the correct path. The same idea can be found with the blessing of offspring. When the children are well behaved and give their parents nachat, this is a certainly a blessing, but when all the parents get is sorrow and heartache, this can hardly be called a blessing.

This is the reason why the blessings were said in the singular, so that each one should be blessed with the appropriate blessing that he requires...

A Segulah For One’s Prayers to Be Accepted

“So shall you bless the Children of Israel” (Bamidbar 6:23)

The Holy Sefarim explain that this exalted commandment of the priestly blessing serves to awaken Heavenly mercy to shower us with an abundance of kindness and salvation.

The sefer ‘Eretz HaChaim’, written by a student of the Ba’al Shem Tov zya”a, writes that there is a kabbalah from the righteous Gaon, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli zya”a, that at the following times it is most opportune for one’s requests to be accepted: At the time of opening the Aron HaKodesh, when lifting up the Sefer Torah, and at the time of the Priestly Blessing. He finishes off with good advice: “Therefore one who has a particular request should beseech at these times – his prayer will certainly be accepted.”

Priceless Matching

“One gold ladle of ten [shekels] filled with incense” (Bamidbar 7:14)

One who partakes of a smaller amount and instead offers it to the poor, even if it just one ladle, his reward is equal to “one gold... of ten [shekels]”, meaning spiritual gold and who can reckon its value?

“One silver bowl” (ibid 19). And if he gives a whole bowl of food to the poor, his reward is “its weight a hundred and thirty [shekels]” (Avnei HaShoham)

Not A Duplication

“On the second day, Nethanel son of Zuar, the leader of Yissachar offered” (Bamidbar 7:18)

In the section concerning the offerings of the leaders, we see that the holy Torah that is particular with each letter, repeats the details of each leaders’ offering, even though each tribe brought the exact same offering.

We can also point out that concerning the first offering it says, “His offering was: one silver bowl”, whereas with the second it says “He brought his offering”.

Maran HaGaon Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul zt”l explains this distinction in his sefer ‘Or L’Tzion – Chochma U’mussar’. Through this repetition, the Torah stresses that the offering of every leader was a result of his own personal awakening and not because he saw the deeds of the others and wished to copy them, therefore it is understandable why the Torah details each one. This is also the reason why with the second leader it says “he brought his offering”, since he brought it from his own initiative.

This idea also contains a practical ethical message for us: “From this, each talmid chacham who decides a ruling for the public, must take note that he should not determine according to the decision of a previous Rav who was faced with this query, but he himself should delve into the depth of each circumstance and understand the situation well and should come to his own decision.”

Treasures

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



Chasing Away the Yetzer Hara

“Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Take a census of the sons of Gershon, as well, according to their fathers’ house, according to their families”

(Bamidbar 4:21-22)

The word נשא (take a census or count) is included in the word שנאה (hatred). And the name גרשון is similar in spelling to word לגרש (to chase away). A person should chase out any form of hatred from his heart. This will give him a boost on the ladder that reaches to Hashem. The Zohar Hakadosh (II, 82b) states that the entire Torah is a book of good advice on how to behave in this world. This pasuk informs us that if we wish to ascend in levels of Torah and yirah, we must first chase animosity out of our hearts. Only then, can we aspire to cleave to Hashem.

Someone once insulted the tzaddik, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, zt”l. After he was informed of Rabbi Yisrael’s identity, the man rushed to his house in shame, begging forgiveness. Rabbi Yisrael replied, “For my part, I forgive you implicitly. But in order to make 100% sure, I would like to do you a favor. Only then can I rest assured that I forgive you with a full heart.”

The way to eradicate enmity from one’s heart is by doing acts of kindness for the person. Giving to another erases all feelings of animosity, replacing them with goodwill and affection. This is alluded to in the Torah. The Kohanim served in the Beit Hamikdash by offering the korbanot of Bnei Yisrael to Hashem. On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol would sacrifice his life for the nation by entering the Inner Sanctum to obtain forgiveness for them. The Kohen thereby served Hashem, as well as Bnei Yisrael. If we truly desire to become sanctified like the Kohanim, we must first remove any vestige of hatred from ourselves. We should do deeds of kindness with our fellow man, just as the Kohanim did for Am Yisrael. This will help us love others perfectly, without the shadow of jealousy and other negative traits.

Man’s most powerful enemy lurks inside him. It is his Yetzer Hara (see Chovot Halevavot, Yichud Hama’aseh 5). When the Yetzer Hara realizes that a person wishes to ascend in spiritual matters, he stands before him, cooling off his zeal for spirituality. Chasing away the Yetzer Hara is the way to reach heights in Avodat Hashem. The words “Take a census of the [heads] of the sons of Gershon” can mean the following. The word “head” is a reference to the Satan. We are enjoined to hate the Satan, the Yetzer Hara, to the extent that we eradicate him completely. Moreover, the Satan is called a snake (see Zohar II, 262). The only way to kill a snake is by cutting off its head. The Satan must be so despised that we obliterate him, as though we are literally decapitating him.



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'

In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

"She arises while it is yet night-time, and gives food to her household and a ration to her maidens"

A wonderful description of the righteousness of Rabbanit Marat Baila a"h, wife of Rabbi Yehoshua Pollack Katz zt"l, author of the famous commentary, the 'Sema', is penned by her son in his foreword (drisha 10). These are his enlightening words:

"Who can compose the words that describe the great splendor of the distinguished woman, the wealthy, modest, pious and upright mistress, my mother, Rabbanit Baila, daughter of the nobleman and philanthropist, Harav R' Yisrael Idlish zt"l. She fasted every day the entire day and at night would not partake of animal products. She possessed the key to the ezrat nashim for she was the first to come to the Beit HaKnesset and was the last to leave, leaving an hour or two after everyone else. After completing her prayers, she did not turn her attention to frivolous matters, instead she went from strength to strength and would study the Torah portion of the week with Rashi and other commentaries. My esteemed father's talmidim who would eat at his table, were familiar with my mother joining in the give and take of the Torah discussions that took place round the table, and sometimes she would even suggest her own explanation that was sweeter than honey, "the sweetness of Torah dripped from her lips" ...

...After occupying herself with Torah and prayer, she would concern herself with performing deeds of kindness; she would visit the sick and comfort mourners, there was no place in the town that her legs did not tread. If she still had time, she did not spend it on meaningless activity, instead she would occupy herself with twining tzitzit and threads used for sewing the Sefer Torah, and she would sew prayer shawls and kitlach (a long white garment). She presided over her house and guided her children and grandchildren and other young lads, doing kindness with them, offering them food and repairing their clothing and washing their hair in honour of the Shabbat. She possessed not a trace of pride; she was generous with charity giving much more than what she owned, and all her ways, thoughts and deeds were in pursuit of mitzvot. Who can detail every facet of her good deeds, of her piety and abstention, and how she forbade herself to partake even from what is permitted... the parchment is too short to describe all her ways of fame."

My Role Is To Provide

The following story is an illustration of the exalted power of a Jewish mother, the eishet chayil, who with her wisdom and insight provides sustenance for her home and establishes generations of blessed and upright children.

Rabbi Ezra Attia zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of 'Porat Yosef', was born to his father, Chacham Yitzchak Attia, who taught young children in the Jewish community of Chalev, and to his mother Leah, daughter of Chacham Michael Shma'a, who was a descendant of the famous Chacham Rabbi Eliyahu Shma'a. When he was just three years old, the young Ezra started learning in 'Kotav', the Talmud Torah in Aram

Tzova, where he was recognized for his exceptional talents and showed a promising future. His quickly surpassed the level of his entire class and even when he started learning with the mekubal Rabbi Eliyahu Avud zt"l, it was clear that he was on a higher level than all the other students.

The year 5666 was a decisive one for the Attia family. The head of the family, Rabbi Yitzchak, fell ill due to the stress of providing for his family. He was niftar on the 16th of Cheshvan, leaving behind his wife the widow, and his young son Ezra, who struggled with the painful, excruciating reality of orphanhood. Since his older brothers and sisters were already married, he was the only one left at home and felt responsible to provide for his mother.

Hard times befell them and hunger started leaving its signs in their home. Rabbi Ezra did not worry about himself; he accepted the hunger pains with love. But when one Erev Shabbat there was not a penny in the house with which to prepare for Shabbat, he could not bear his mother's distress. He walked around the almost empty house, contemplating each object, maybe there is still something he can sell?

"Why are you not going to the Beit Midrash to learn?" His mother did not understand.

"How can I go and leave you empty-handed?"

"Don't worry my child," his mother courageously replied, "your role is to learn Torah, and my role is to provide for the home. Hashem will help us!"

Close to Shabbat, Rabbi Ezra returned home. His Torah learning had restored his spirits and made him forget his troubles. His mother greeted him with a shining face. A surprise awaited her dear son: the Shabbos food was prepared and ready! Her eyes shining with joy, she explained: "I know well of your great desire to devote yourself to Torah study. I tearfully begged the Master of the World and poured out my heart that He shouldn't keep you back from the learning that you love so dearly. Immediately after my prayers I found an old gold earring, that had rolled away and I had forgotten about, from back when I was a bride! I quickly went and sold it in honor of Shabbat"...

Their salvation was on the way.

At that time, the first yeshiva opened in Yerushalayim for the scholars of Aram Tzova. Rabbi Ezra Harari-Raful established the yeshiva, and Rabbi Refael Shlomo Laniado stood at its head. When Rabbi Ezra Harari-Raful heard that Rabbi Ezra Attia had become an apprentice to his uncle in order to study carpentry, he was dismayed: will the world lose one of its greatest lights? Will the Jewish people G-d forbid lose one of its future teachers?

He wasted no time and approached Rabbi Ezra with an offer: Come and study in my yeshiva, and from now on I will take responsibility for your parnassah. With great thanks to Hashem Rabbi Ezra started learning in the yeshiva 'Ohel Moed', where he quickly became known as one of the foremost Torah scholars and his exceptional greatness in Torah became public knowledge.

This righteous Jewish mother's copious tears in concern for her son's Torah learning, afforded her the merit of her son serving as the Rosh Yeshiva of 'Porat Yosef' for close to forty-five years, leaving thousands of talmidim who follow in his path and continue to spread his Torah until today.