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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah The Path to Follow



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MASKIL LÉDAVID

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

After Death, We Become Holy

The parshiyot Acharei Mot and Kedoshim are contiguous. There is a proverb that people use regarding this order: "After a person dies (אחרי מות), he is considered holy (קדוש)." This implies that after one dies, he is sanctified. This is because he is separated from his physical body and is not subject to its passions. As long as a person lives, his physical and spiritual aspects are intermingled, confusing him in his perception of good and evil. He is not sure where his inclinations are leading him; is it to the right path, or the wrong one? Since the battle between the Yetzer Hara and Yetzer Tov is constant, and lasts as long as a person lives, Chazal (Avot 2:4) warn, "Do not believe in yourself until the day you die." One can never be sure of his final outcome.

We learn of great sages, such as Elisha ben Avuyah, among others, who despite their initial righteousness, ultimately departed from the proper path. Sacrilegious and heretical literature was discovered in their possession (Chagigah 15b). How can we explain this? Chazal suggest a few reasons (Tosafot, *ibid.* 15a). Ultimately, it is clear that as long as a person lives, his spiritual status is not guaranteed. He must constantly battle with himself, day after day, hour after hour, to maintain his kedushah, as well as elevate it.

Perhaps this is the reason that people say, "After a person dies (אחרי מות), he is considered holy (קדוש)." This implies that after a person dies and is separated from his physical aspect, he no longer sins since his essence is his spiritual, holy soul. This is true because the World to Come is the world where one receives his reward, and is not a world of action (Eiruvin 22a). Therefore, the perfection of man is only after his death.

Similarly, Chazal (Bamidbar Rabbah 14:21) say that only after death is one capable of reaching the fiftieth level of kedushah. As long as he lives in this world, he can only reach the forty-ninth level (Rosh Hashanah 21b) because of the physical forces that he embodies.

The parshiyot in Chumash Vayikra educate a person how to sacrifice himself for Hashem. In this way, he merits to be sanctified and achieve perfection upon his death. It is an established custom to teach young children the parshiyot discussing korbanot (Tanchuma 96:14), despite the fact that they are difficult to comprehend. This is in order to train them in the concept of self-sacrifice in their early years. Just as an infant automatically places everything in his mouth without thinking about it, likewise, when children are taught the parashah of korbanot at an early age, they become accustomed to automatically subjugating their own desires to Hashem's will. They are trained to constantly mouth words of Torah, and to fulfill its commands with the proper dedication.

If we were to ask a G-d fearing person, who was raised in this way from birth, if it is difficult for him to keep the laws of Shabbat, he would certainly answer,

without hesitation, that keeping Shabbat is his pleasure, and he does not experience any hardship in doing so. This is because he was trained in this way since infancy. Likewise, we train young children to cleave to Hashem with self-sacrifice so that this conduct becomes second nature to them, and it would not occur to them to behave otherwise. When a person lives his life with self-sacrifice, he merits dying in sanctity and achieves perfection upon his death.

In the same way that a child can be easily trained to acquire emunah, one can lose it easily, as well. Therefore, one must be extremely cautious and constantly examine himself to ensure that his faith is unwavering and that he entertains no doubts that could cool off his dedication in serving Hashem.

On one of my trips to Venezuela, an older person with a full beard, wearing tzitzit, approached me. He confessed, with regret, that his emunah had weakened. Truthfully, I had not anticipated hearing such words from a person who looked so steeped in yirat Hashem. However, it was a lesson for me that one cannot know how G-d-fearing a person really is, even one who looks G-d-fearing on the outside. One must constantly guard himself not to lose the faith that he nurtured.

When I asked the elderly man if there was a specific reason for his loss of faith, he answered that for a period of time he began to be lax in observing mitzvot. In the wake of his laxity, he began to feel his faith wavering.

This is similar to a machine. Even the most sophisticated motors, when not used for an extended period of time, become rusty and impaired. Likewise, if a person does not scrupulously fulfill Hashem's mitzvot, his emunah will become corroded and waver. This man confided in me that his doubts in faith arose after he had moved to a different location, surrounded by green country expanses, with a stream of water running by. Since he was drawn to the physical attractions of his surroundings, he neglected his spiritual obligations, and shortly after, he lost his faith.

The last letters of the title of the parashah אחרי מות (after death) has the numerical value of four hundred and ten. This is the equivalent of the gematria of the word קדוש (sanctified). If we would pause for a moment to contemplate how a person achieves perfection, we would realize that it is the split second decisions of choosing to do good and abandoning all evil. Many people can testify that they are often faced with an internal conflict whether to act in a way that is correct, or whether to act improperly but gain instant pleasure. These battles are extremely difficult, throwing a person into throes of indecision. However there are those who earn their World in only one hour (Avodah Zarah 17a). These are people who in one instant decide to forgo instant gratification and choose instead everlasting pleasure, which is the lot of those who fulfill Hashem's will.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

22 - Rabbi Yehudah Rozenish
Author of Mishnah L'Melech

23 - Rabbi Moshe De Trany Author
of Shu"t Hamabit

24 - Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak Heikin
Rosh Yeshivat Aix-les-Baine

25 - Rabbi Chaim Halberstam
Author of Divrei Chaim

26 - Yehoshua ben Nun

27 - Rabbi Avigdor Miller

28 - Rabbi Yichye Tzalah The
Maharitz



Walking in their Ways

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

A Man with a Mission

I often feel overwhelmed by the load of the public which I carry on my weary shoulders. Especially when I am required to wander from one country to another in order to support Torah institutions, I feel the burden heavily. As I traverse the miles, by land and by sea, I am filled with yearning for the sweet taste of the Gemara. I am overcome by the desire to remove my heavy weight and simply sit in the House of Hashem all the days of my life.

When feelings such as these fill my heart, I visit the Sages of our nation for guidance. Should I return to the Beit Hamidrash bench and immerse myself in Torah study, unfettered by the shackles of the public, or should I plow on in my mandate of support-

ing Torah institutions, stopping only to readjust my load in order to make it more manageable?

Approximately twenty years ago, I asked this question for the first time. At that time, I turned to the Rav and Gaon, Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik, zt"l, from Zurich, for advice. Later, I consulted with the leader of the generation, Maran Harav Shach, zt"l, as well as others.

Their response was unequivocal: "Each person is placed in this world with a specific purpose. Through this purpose, he can accomplish his personal tikkun. Since you were chosen by Hashem for zikuy harabim, never entertain thoughts of abandoning your mission. It is your holy calling to concern yourself with upholding Torah institutions, for the Torah study of the multitudes depends upon

you. If not for the financial security which you provide them, the sound of Torah would be silenced."

The Torah Sages instructed me not to forego the tremendous privilege of bringing merit to the public, for it is this distinction which will stand in my defense after 120 years on this earth.

Regarding my wanderings from place to place, the Torah Sages taught me an invaluable lesson. One can taste the sweetness of Torah wherever he is. He can delve into its teachings while airborne. I can grow in Torah knowledge while simultaneously recognizing the virtue of my vocation – supporting the sound of Torah and disseminating Hashem's message across the globe.

The Haftarah



"The word of Hashem came to me, saying, Now you, Son of Man" (Yechezkiel 22)

The connection to the Parshah: In the Haftarah, the Navi, Yechezkiel, shouts against the corruption of Am Yisrael at the time. This is connected to the Parshah, since Am Yisrael is warned not to imitate the abominable conduct of the Nations.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

No Room for Envy

There is another benefit that results from guarding one's speech, which is acquiring the attribute of peace. By guarding one's tongue, one avoids the envy of other people. Everyone will love him and trust him with their secrets. They will never slander him. This is measure for measure, as is quoted in the name of the Arizal.

Reasons for Jewish Customs



It is customary to eat fish during the Shabbat meal.

One reason for the custom is because during the Creation of the world three consecutive days received blessing: The fifth day for the fish, the sixth day for man, and on the seventh day for Shabbat. In order to merit the threefold blessing, it is customary to eat fish.

Another reason is because fish do not have eyebrows, and its eyes remain open. This is an allusion to the constant supervision of Hashem, Who sets His Eyes, through His great mercy, upon those who fear Him.



Words of Wisdom

Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

Citing the Reason for Their Death

“Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Ahron’s two sons, when they approached before Hashem, and they died” (Vayikra 16:1)

In four places the Torah mentions the deaths of Ahron’s son’s, and each time it mentions their sin. Why is this so? In order to inform us that they had committed no other sin besides for the one mentioned.

Rabbi Elazar Hamodai says: We realize how difficult the deaths of Ahron’s sons were for Hashem, since every place that the deaths of Ahron’s sons are mentioned, their sin is mentioned.

Why is this so?

In order not to give an opening for people to say that because of their corrupt deeds which they did secretly they died.

(Psikta d’Rav Kahana)

The Torah Serves as Atonement

“Speak to Ahron and to his sons and to all the Children of Israel, and say to them: This is the matter (דבר) that Hashem has commanded, saying:” (Vayikra 17:2)

Hashem foresaw that the Beit Hamikdash would be destroyed. Hashem said: As long as the Beit Hamikdash exists and you bring sacrifices in it you receive atonement for your sins. When the Beit Hamidash will no longer be in existence, what will serve as atonement?

Involvement in the study of Torah, which is compared to sacrifices that atone for your sins, as it says (above), “This is the matter (דבר).” Likewise the navi says [regarding the Torah], “Take words (דברים) with you” (Hoshea 14:3).

(Midrash Tanchuma)

Treasures

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



Blurring the Vision

“And Hashem said to Moshe: Speak to Ahron, your brother – he shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary, within the Curtain, in front of the Cover that is upon the Ark, so that he should not die; for in a cloud will I appear upon the Ark-cover” (Vayikra 16:3)

The story of Naaman, the Commander of the Army of Aram who was stricken with leprosy, is told in sefer Melachim. His Jewish handmaid advised him to go to Elisha the navi and receive his blessings for a cure. Naaman listened to her advice and went to Elisha Hanavi. Elisha told him to go to the Jordan River and immerse himself seven times, and he will be cured from his leprosy. At first, Naaman refused to accept the words of the prophet and stormed out in anger. However, after a while, his anger subsided and he agreed to do what the navi recommended. It is told that after Naaman immersed himself seven times in the Jordan River, he was entirely cured from his leprosy. Naaman wanted to reward the navi for his services and exclaimed: “Behold, now I know that there is no G-d in the whole world except in Israel! And now please accept a tribute from your servant.” However, Elisha Hanavi refused to accept any payment from the Commander, and he saw him off.

Elisha Hanavi had a servant by the name of Gehazi. When Gehazi heard that the navi had refused to take payment from Naaman, the Commander of the Army of Aram, he chased after his chariot and slyly procured gifts for himself. He called to the Commander and told him, “Just now two young men of the prophet’s disciples have arrived to me from Mount Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.” Naaman was glad to be able to repay Elisha Hanavi for his kindness, and he was sure that the request was coming from Elisha, Gehazi’s master. He hurried to fulfill his request. When Elisha became aware of his servant’s sly scheme to acquire riches for himself, he cursed him, “Naaman’s leprosy shall therefore cleave to you and to your children forever!” His curse was fulfilled immediately, and when Gehazi left his presence, he was white as snow with leprosy.

We may wonder, how can we explain the fact that Gehazi acted cunningly contrary to the Prophet’s will and asked for favors for himself? After all, Gehazi was not stupid. Certainly he knew that in the end Elisha would find out what he had done. How did he not fear that his greed would be revealed?

The conclusion we draw is that this is the tactics of the Yetzer Hara, which blinds even wise people. Through devious methods it convinces a person to act in an irrational manner, which he certainly would not consciously choose to do. Because of the powerful force of the Yetzer Hara, sometimes a person falls into its trap without thinking. This is exactly what happened to Gehazi. He acted blindly, without thinking about the outcome of his actions. Such is the ways of the Yetzer Hara. It distorts the logic of a person so that he does not consider the outcome of his actions, and on the other hand, it entices him to focus on the present, which is presented in an alluring manner, full of pleasure and delight. In this way, the person becomes obsessed by the momentary enticement without thinking of the consequences.

In light of this we can explain that Hashem told Moshe to command Ahron that he should not come at all times into the inner Sanctuary whenever he pleases, even though we would never suspect him of doing this sin. The command arouses us to consider the powerful force of the Yetzer Hara, who schemes constantly in devious manners to trap righteous people into his snare. Chazal teach us that the greater a person is in comparison to his fellow, his Yetzer Hara becomes greater in comparison, as well. We cannot fathom the challenges and hardships that tzaddikim have to contend with in their spiritual service. And although it may seem outwardly that the tzaddik does not have inner struggles and difficulty in refining his character traits, the opposite is true. In fact, the high level of the tzaddik requires of him greater efforts in his constant battle against the Yetzer Hara, which does not take kindly to his lofty level in avodat Hashem.

Wellsprings

Chapters in Child-Raising



Following the last chapter, in which we dealt with the powerful influence of the Jewish mother in the education of her children and their future success, we chose to cite a compelling, true story describing the ups and downs of a child, who thanks to the wisdom of the boy's mother, he merited getting on the right path.

The story and its message weaved in the tale, is quoted from the book, *Le'ehov*, through the courtesy of the educational advisor who wrote the book, Rabbi Yitzchak Rabi, shlita:

I was a difficult child, not easy at all, and my mother would say that she could have raised ten children with the same energy she spent on me.

In essence, I was not bad, just very difficult. Throughout my long childhood, people labeled me: "leader," "naughty," "he will grow up," "lazy," "troublemaker," "what will be with him?" At the age of twelve I was already thrown out of class. I was not at all a stupid child. On the contrary, I was smart. I had a sharp tongue, defending the weak who adored me, and the bullies were scared of me. I would love to help a lot and everybody loved me.

I grew up and entered Yeshiva. But even there a short time later they threw me out. Today I am nearly forty, and I can say without reservation that I was not lazy, not rebellious against anyone, but I did not thrive in the regular system.

I found my match, of course from a broken home. She was a girl who the most important thing for her was belonging to a warm family. She had to settle for marrying the reject of the yeshiva. My parents pressed me to get married just so that I should begin a new life. I am blessed with a wonderful wife in every way, and I wish that everyone should be as fortunate as we are. She is a true woman of valor, she accepted me the way I am.

This was the opening to a new life. I made sure to set times for Torah study, do the Daf Yomi, pray with a minyan, and I earned a living by marketing products. I lived a life of tranquility. No one told me what to do. I ran my life, I made a decent living, my wife also worked, and we lived a happy life in relative wealth. I had wonderful children, thank G-d!

Now I will get to the point of my story! After all you know about me, you may be surprised

to hear that today I have a completely different profession. I am a mashgiach in a yeshiva!

In fact, precisely because my life had been such a challenge, and I had experienced such lows, I felt that I was qualified to help others. So I applied for the job of a mashgiach. The Rosh Yeshiva's eyes opened wide, and I explained to him my history briefly. I told him that I think a mashgiach needs to be aware of the difficulties that some boys go through.

Those who toed the line all their lives cannot really understand the depths of despair and frustration that a child may sink in to. I feel that I have a mission to help them. Therefore I entered the field, and I was awarded a lot of Heavenly assistance. Today everyone reaps the rewards.

I would like to present to you one of the most important methods that helped me survive my childhood, and which helps me help others as well. And if you will be wise enough to adopt it, my dear readers, you will only gain in the deal. It can be applied in every situation, also for regular mainstream children, and even during happy times. The method is: letters, notes, and written words straight from the heart.

During my most difficult days, days in which no one could talk to me out of rage, my mother would correspond with me. Every morning I found a note under my pillow. It was either a note or a letter, and sometimes it was just three words: "I love you," or sometimes only two words: "good morning" accompanied by some chocolate lentils. Sometimes there was a full-page heartfelt letter written in tears.

Also when she was angry at me, she wrote:

"We will yet see a lot of nahat from you," "You will yet be proud of yourself." Sometimes there were compliments interwoven: "I see that you tried hard, even though the results were so terrible." Sometimes she wrote me short sentences loaded with advice and guidance in a nutshell. I sensed her intense love straight from her heart. I received so much encouragement and constantly felt connected to her. She always wrote the truth from

the depths of her heart and offered provisions to fortify me for my road ahead. Often she would leave me a candy and write: "to sweeten your difficult moments."

She made me believe that although on the surface everything seemed to have gone astray, and my life was totally ruined, and it would have been better if I had not been born at all, somehow there was still hope. All was not lost. I was still loved, I had self-worth, and I could still succeed. Although my mother was so upset with me that she couldn't even talk to me, she still believed that she would see nahat from me. This was a sign that all was not lost, even if it seemed so at the time.

This is the method that I passed on. I write notes to my children of things that sometimes are hard for me to say, or things that warm the heart but we do not find the right setting to express them verbally. I do it in carrier pigeon style by placing the notes under the pillow, or inside the pencil case, briefcase, or in a notebook. It works! I should know!

I passed on this method also to the yeshiva. I write letters with personal guidance for the students with loving words explaining to them why it is important for them to get up on time. I emphasize that it is important for their benefit and not for mine. It is their life. I buy lots of decorative stationary and chocolate coins to wish them a sweet day. All this stirs them. It works!

When I write to a student, who does not open a Gemara, that I want him to invite me to his first siyum of the entire tractate that he will learn, although I know that at the moment he is experiencing difficulties, and that presently the Yetzer Hara is getting the better of him, I do not give up on him making a siyum.

I write words of warmth and hope. You should know: my children read the notes, as well as my students. I can attest that none of them threw them out, and a lot of them can testify that they saved them. I am an example of one of them!