

The Path to Follow



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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia**
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MASKIL LÉDAVID

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

Preparation for receiving and toiling in the Torah

Rashi quotes Torat Kohanim's question: Why is specifically the mitzvah of shemittah connected to Har Sinai? All the mitzvot and their laws were given on Har Sinai. What is special about shemittah that it warrants mention? Rashi says that it is written here to teach that just as all the details of shemittah were stated at Sinai, so too were all the details of all the mitzvot stated at Sinai. However it is still hard to understand why specifically the mitzvah of shemittah is mentioned in the pasuk. Why not the mitzvah of Shabbat, for example, and then since the mitzvah of Shabbat is mentioned in reference to Sinai that would indicate that all the mitzvot were given there. Why specifically was the mitzvah of shemittah taken as an example for all the other mitzvot?

We know that there is no greater self-effacement than one who observes the mitzvah of shemittah in his fields, - till now during the previous six years he was the owner and everyone had to defer to him. During those years no one dared to enter his fields without his permission. His fields are closed with fences all around and his employees worked to reap his bountiful harvest. And now in the shemittah year he is no longer the owner and master over his fields. The proselyte, the orphans, and the widows become masters of his fields, turning them ownerless...

Of course, this is not easy to do. The Midrash compares these people to great angels, "The strong warriors who do His bidding," since they act with total subservience. Therefore, Hashem instructed specifically the mitzvah of shemittah at Har Sinai, since just as Har Sinai humbled itself before all the other mountains, it is so regarding the mitzvah of shemittah. There is no greater expression of subservience and humbleness than a person who voluntarily relinquishes ownership of all his land and abandons his fields. This serves as an example for all other mitzvot.

A person is expected to fulfill all mitzvot with this spirit, void of any arrogance, just in humbleness and humility, which is the condition for accepting the Torah. Without uprooting haughtiness from one's heart it is impossible for him to accept the Torah. Therefore, Hashem took specifically the mitzvah of shemittah as an example for all other mitzvot, since it is the ultimate example of subservience and the epitome of humility.

The days of Sefirah are preparation for receiving the Torah. It is told in the name of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, zy"ta, that during each day of the Sefirah, which totals 49 days, a person should work on one of the 48 kinyanei haTorah. In this way, on the 48th day he will reach perfection in all his character traits and be prepared to receive the Torah. Similarly, before Matan Torah, Bnei Yisrael prepared themselves by correcting their character traits in order to receive the Torah on Har Sinai.

It is told about the Gaon of Vilna, that when he sat down to learn Torah, Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory, visited him and wanted to teach him the secrets of the Torah. Who would not be delighted at such an offer? But the Gaon rejected the offer and said he prefers to learn by toiling in Torah, which is his entire purpose in life, to acquire Torah through toil and self-sacrifice. This is as stated, "If you will [exert effort to] observe My decrees and keep My commandments and perform them," indicating that one should toil in Torah.

We find that tzaddikim toil in Torah also in the World to Come, as Chazal say (Berachot 64a), Tzaddikim have no rest, not in this world and not in the World to Come, as it says "They go from strength to strength." Certainly Chazal were referring to their constant progress in Torah. However, regarding repose, surely they relax from their worries and troubles. Chazal say (Berachot 17a), "But the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads," since they are not troubled by material matters as in this world. This is because in this world they are hounded by the Yetzer Hara, who sways the hearts of man and seduces them to stray from the path of Hashem and not adhere to the mitzvot.

The method to overcome the seduction is to toil in Torah. When a person works and is happy and experiences the sweetness of Torah, he will not want to exchange it for any fleeting worldly pleasure. Consequently, he will distance himself from the Yetzer Hara which blinds the eyes of man. This is not so in the World to Come, where there is no Yetzer Hara and there is no need for the toil in Torah in order to drive the Yetzer Hara away. Therefore, in the World to Come tzaddikim sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy the splendor of the Shechinah. But there they also toil in learning Torah, as it says, "They go from strength to strength."

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Walking in their Ways

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

No Room for Jealousy

R' Mordechai Knafo is my host in Morocco. Whenever I visit, he treats me royally. His hachnasat orchim knows no bounds.

For many years, R' Knafo lived in a small house in Casablanca, where he raised his family and hosted guests. What he lacked in physical accommodations, he more than made up for with his accommodating heart.

Once, when I observed how tight his living quarters were, I told him it was time to find a larger house. There, he would be able to raise his family in comfort and host his guests with greater ease. R' Knafo accepted my advice and soon began his search for a bigger home. One day, he phoned me with the good news that, Baruch Hashem, he had found the ideal home in Casablanca. He asked me to accompany him to look at it.

I was more than happy to accede to his request, in this manner partially repaying the generous hospitality which he had always granted me. We set a time to meet. Unfortunately, Heaven had other plans for us. I was unable to meet him at the appointed time, and we never went together to see the house.

R' Knafo remained in his small house, very disappointed that the previous deal had fallen through. Since we had not managed to look at the house together, it was rented to another family.

I tried consoling him. "Maybe this house is not intended for you," I suggested.

"A Jew must endeavor to accomplish. I tried my best, but nothing came of it," he replied.

"I also tried to come, but Heaven ordained otherwise. This is obviously Hashem's will."

I offered him words of solace. I even blessed him that Hashem perform a miracle on his behalf, in the merit of my fathers. I said that Hashem should arrange that Mrs. Ben-Simchon, the landlady, would phone him and offer him the house for rent once again. But he was so dejected that he refused to accept my words of encouragement.

Not much time later, R' Knafo called me up, this time his voice filled with joy. What happened? He explained that his prayers were accepted. The man who had rented Mrs. Ben-Simchon's house in his stead, was suddenly called to Canada, where an important job offer had been presented to

him. The house was up for rent once again. The landlady called R' Knafo to offer it to him first.

We immediately set out together to see the house. It was big and roomy, and the price was right. We agreed to take it. I asked the landlady for the rental contract, but she merely replied, "I have none. I always rented it out without a contract."

This was quite surprising to me, but we closed the deal anyway. R' Knafo skipped out of the house a happy man.

I told him that when something is designated for a specific person, no one in the world can take it from him. The Gemara states (Yoma 38b), "One person cannot touch even a hairsbreadth of that which is designated for his friend." Whatever one is meant to get, he will receive, in its entirety, from Hashem.

Similarly, I have no doubt that the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim, in which R' Knafo excels, is what stood him in good stead to receive the house he was entitled to. This was all in order to allow him to continue his time-honored custom of welcoming guests with open arms and an open door.

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week: "**And Yermiyahu said**" (Yermiyahu 32)

The connection to the parashah: Yermiyahu Hanavi prophesies to Bnei Yisrael about the return to Zion, and about building houses and acquisition of fields and vineyards in Eretz Yisrael. This is similar to the discussion in the parashah about the acquisition of houses and fields and the laws of their redemption.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Restitution According to the damage

One who misbehaved and caused others to sin in lashon hara and then wishes to correct himself, Chazal say: Regarding tzaddikim, in the very area that they sin, they make amends. Therefore, the first thing he should do is get accustomed to avoid gatherings of people chatting. He should also make an effort to bring merit to the public through his tongue, admonishing them soundly and encouraging them to cleave to Torah and mitzvot and bring peace among people.

Reasons for Jewish Customs



Regarding the mitzvah of Sefirat Haomer, even though it is a mitzvah that comes periodically, we do not make the blessing of "Shehechyanu" over it.

There are a few reasons given for this:

Whether because one does not derive joy or pleasure from this mitzvah, or whether because of the concern that one may forget one day to make the blessing and then his previous blessings will have been in vain, or whether because the days of Sefirah serve as preparation for Shavuot, and this is the reason why one makes a blessing on the Chag Ha'Atzeret, which is the climax, and thus the blessing includes also the Chag of Shavuot and also the mitzvah of Sefirat Haomer.



Words of Wisdom

Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

The Favored Land

“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine” (Vayikra 25:23)

Hashem says, just as I sold my nation, I returned to them and brought them close, as it says (Yermiyahu 3:14), “Return, O wayward sons – the word of Hashem – for I shall be your master. I shall take you, [even] one from a city and two from a family, and I shall bring you to Zion.” It also says (Yeshayahu 52:3), “For thus said Hashem: For naught were you sold, and without money will you be redeemed.” Therefore, the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, as it says, “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is Mine” – I favor Eretz Yisrael which I have sanctified over all other countries.

Know that when Eretz Yisrael was divided among the tribes, it would not pass from tribe to tribe, but remained divided by each tribe to itself.

Know and observe how judges discussed at length the issue of the daughters of Tzelafhad, so that their property should not be passed from one tribe to another, and Hashem consented to their argument, as it says, “The daughters of Tzelafhad speak properly.” Therefore, if a redeemer will be found, it is good. And if not, whoever will take it will have it for a yovel, and vacate after a yovel.

Hashem said: When the time of the redemption will arrive, I will redeem you, as it says, “For a day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redemption has come” (Yeshayahu 63:4) - (Midrash Tanchuma)

The Coin that Saves Lives

“If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him” (Vayikra 25:35)

Rabbi Pinchas said in the name of Rabbi Reuvain: Anyone who gives a coin to a pauper – Hashem gives him a coin.

Is he giving him only a coin? Is he not giving him life? How is this so? There was a loaf of bread selling for ten coins and a poor man was in the market, but did not have more than nine coins. A man came and gave him a coin, and he bought the loaf of bread and ate and became revived through it.

Says Hashem: Also you, when your soul wishes to leave your body, I return it to you. Therefore, Moshe warns Yisrael “If your brother becomes impoverished.” (“Vayikra Rabbah”)

Atonement for the Rich

“If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him – proselyte or resident – so that he can live with you.” (Vayikra 25:35)

Rav Tanchum would do the following when his mother would take for him a bunch of green vegetables from the market – she would take two: one for him and one for the poor. As it says, “G-d has made the one as well as the other.” The poor and the rich in order that they will bring merit to each other and atone for one by the other. Therefore, Moshe warns “You shall strengthen him.”

He is called by eight names: poor (עני), destitute (אביון), unfortunate (מסכן), impoverished (רש), penniless (דל), lowly (דך), pauper (מר), and a goner (והלך).

Poor, as understood literally. Destitute, since he desires everything. Unfortunate, because he is degraded by all. Impoverished, indicating that he is impoverished of all possessions. Penniless, since he is depleted. Lowly, signifying that he is depressed – he sees food but does not eat it, he sees but does not drink. Pauper, since he is downtrodden and is considered like a doormat that people step on. A goner, because all his assets are gone.

Therefore Moshe warns, “If your brother becomes impoverished and his means falter in your proximity, you shall strengthen him – proselyte or resident – so that he can live with you.”

Treasures

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



Without Torah a Person Has No Life

“Hashem spoke to Moshe on Mount Sinai, saying”
(Vayikra 25:1)

In the days approaching the hillula of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes, zy”a, we present an idea stated in his name which is connected to receiving the Torah.

In Pirkei Avot (Perek 3, Mishnah 8) “Rabbi Dostai bar Yannai says in the name of Rabbi Meir: Whoever forgets anything of his Torah learning, Scripture considers it as if he bears guilt for his soul, for it is said: ‘But beware and guard your soul exceedingly lest you forget the things your eyes have seen.’ Does this apply even if [he forgot because] his studies were too difficult for him? [This is not so, for] Scripture says, ‘And lest they be removed from your heart all the days of your life.’ Thus, one does not bear guilt for his soul unless he sits [idly] and [through lack of concentration and review] removes them from his consciousness.”

It is difficult to understand the severity in forgetting anything of his Torah learning that because of it one bears guilt for his soul. Why is this so?

We can explain it in the following manner. One who looks at the root of the matter of memory or forgetfulness observes that it all depends on the impression the person experienced when he was learning or witnessed the matter. A man who forgot something in the Torah – forgetting does not just happen, but it occurs because of a lack in receiving the Torah in the way it was presented at Har Sinai.

The Scripture “But beware and guard your soul exceedingly lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they be removed from your heart” teaches that since Matan Torah was accompanied by thunder and lightning “The entire people saw the thunder and the flames, the sound of the shofar and the smoking mountain” (Shemot 20:15), Chazal infer that people saw the sounds, and here as well it says “The things your eyes have seen,” since they saw the words of Torah, meaning that they were engraved in their hearts in a way that they would never forget them. And, of course, also our feet stood at Har Sinai, as it says (Devarim 29:14), “But with whoever is here, standing with us today before Hashem, or G-d, and with whoever is not here with us today,” so therefore we are warned not to forget the words of Torah that our eyes beheld.

Thus, we see why it is possible to obligate a person not to forget, since he should learn Torah passionately, with intensity and animation, just like on Har Sinai when the Torah was given. Then if he forgets his Torah he “bears guilt on his soul.” It does not say that one deserves to be put to death, because it is not so. But, since he disconnects from the source of life, which is the Torah, it is as if he is sentenced to death, because without Torah a person has no life.

Wellsprings

Chapters in Child-Raising



In the last few months, we have dwelled on the subject of changing the atmosphere in the home, a change which has the power to generate a transformation in the education of our children. This clearly requires an investment of time and effort. We would like to stress the following three points that are worthwhile to focus on to start with.

First, it is highly recommended to try to ensure that bedtime passes calmly and peacefully. Children should go to bed with a good feeling. Everything that needs to be done should be finished before bedtime, and all the tensions of the day should be put aside, enabling the child to fall asleep in an atmosphere of warmth and love.

We will explain this further from a purely physical point of view, so we will better understand its importance.

The nighttime hours have great significance in building the emotional world of a person, or child. If a child goes to sleep feeling stressed or with a bad atmosphere in the house, he will not sleep well or be truly rested for the next day. When he opens his eyes in the morning, these tensions may have grown completely out of proportion. They will accompany

him throughout the day, and he will again go to sleep feeling them. This becomes a vicious and continuous cycle.

On the other hand, if a child goes to sleep when there is a warm and peaceful atmosphere in the house, these good feelings will penetrate his emotional world. When he opens his eyes in the morning, he is at peace, and this pleasant feeling accompanies him throughout the day. The positive results are seen immediately, and bear blessed fruit.

Second, the time period when a person wakes up in the morning is very significant. This is because he naturally begins to feel tension at this time. The pressures of time and the ticking of the clock push us into dark places. The way to get around this is to try to wake our children so they should immediately be in a good frame of mind, with humor and a smile.

Of course, getting ready for school naturally adds tension to the morning routine. For example, the school bus is due to come at any minute and the child's clothes are still on the hanger. Therefore, it is essential to help our children get ready for leaving the house in a happy and positive way. This includes making preparations beforehand, to ensure that everything the child needs to do is done calmly, and without pressure.

We all know the difficulties inherent in the morning routine. But anyone who has been successful in ensuring a smooth and calm wake-up routine can testify that not only is the

atmosphere in the house improved, but the child's success at school is enhanced. Anyone involved in education will advise parents to adopt this plan, and will affirm that the success of every stage of the child's day is dependent on it. When it is neglected, we see the well-known results of inability to concentrate, hyperactivity, and violence in the child. These are all the results of the child trying to cope with feelings of alienation and rejection that trouble him.

The third point is the importance of preparing ourselves for when our children return from school. Parents should accustom themselves to greeting their children with a smile and a hug, welcoming them to an obviously loving home.

The moment a child is reunited with his family after long hours of absence establishes the way he views his relationship with his family. This is especially so after a child has spent many hours at school experiencing the storm of emotions he undergoes during that time. It is especially important to demonstrate love and empathy toward our children when they come home. Even though we may be tired and feeling the stresses of the day ourselves, we should try our best to welcome our children in a pleasant and loving way.

We know that "all beginnings are difficult," and sometimes very difficult, but the points we have mentioned are within our capabilities and, as we have said, well worth the effort.

Men of Faith

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

Faith in the Words of the Tzaddik

A Jewish merchant was caught in a terrible situation. He purchased a large stock of merchandise, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. However, he did not know that the merchandise was actually stolen goods.

The police, who knew of the presence of the stolen goods, came unexpectedly to raid his house. They began conducting an extensive search for the merchandise.

The merchant's brother, who went to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu to ask for his blessings and advice, related that the merchant was beside himself with worry. He knew that besides for the police confiscating all his goods, causing him a great loss, he would also have to face trial. Ultimately, he would have to pay a fortune in taxes, plus a heavy fine for purchasing stolen goods and storing them in his house.

"When the police come back to the house," Moreinu v'Rabbeinu instructed, "take salt and throw it on the ground. Then call out, 'In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, everyone should get out of here!'" You will witness miracles, with the help of Hashem. However, it is only on the condition that the merchandise was truly purchased honestly, and you had no idea that it was stolen goods."

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu clarifies that it is not a segulah to throw salt on the ground to avoid the law! On the contrary, when a person gets caught in a situation in which he sees no way out, precisely at that moment he

should strengthen his faith in Hashem and realize that "my help is from Hashem, Maker of heaven and earth." As seen from our story, the segulah succeeded. However, it was not the segulah that caused the miracle, but the merchant's faith to carry out what the tzaddik advised him to do, and his belief in Hashem.

The brother quickly went to the merchant's house and told him what the Rav had instructed him to do. The merchant began to scoff at his brother and screamed, "Are you crazy? The police want to take us to jail, and you want to add to their fury?"

The brother, who believed staunchly in the merits of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, did not pay attention to the tirade. He decided to take things into his own hands. When the police returned, accompanied by their commander, he took a large handful of salt, threw it on the ground and began calling loudly, "In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, everyone should get out of here!"

The police gazed at him and then looked at one another, mutely. Suddenly, the commander said to his officers, "Okay, let's go. We did not find anything." He then turned to the merchant and warned, "Next time, be careful not to buy or deal in stolen merchandise."

A big kiddush Hashem resulted from the story among all the Jewish merchants.