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**MASKIL LÉDAVID**

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

**What is the greatest blessing that Hashem gave Am Yisrael?**

**“May Hashem lift His countenance to you and establish peace for you”** (Bamidbar 6:26)

Hashem told Moshe to tell Aharon and his sons the berachah with which they should bless Am Yisrael. The wording of the pasuk is, “So shall you bless the Children of Israel, say to them.” Rashi explains, in the name of the commentaries, that the word אמור (say) is written in full, to imply that they should not bless them in haste and distraction, but rather, with concentration and a complete heart. In this way the blessing will not be mere lip-service, but a blessing from the depths of their heart.

The Torah expounds that the sons of Aharon included many blessings in this berachah. They mentioned that Hashem should bless the possessions of the Jewish people and protect them from highwaymen and bandits. Hashem is the only One Who can bestow a gift upon a person and also protect it for him. Thus, He is the only One Who grants complete gifts. The Kohanim further blessed the nation that Hashem should shine His face upon them, granting them favor. He should overcome His anger and not punish them immediately.

Our Chachamim add that the greatest blessing that Hashem conferred upon His sons is the gift of peace, one of the pillars upon which the entire world stands. Hashem’s Name is peace, and His signature is peace.

There is a story about Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, the disciple of the Vilna

Gaon. He was once informed that one of his students had passed away. When he received the sad news, he wanted to escort him on his final journey, and ask him for forgiveness if there were any times that he had not explained the Gemara precisely. When Rabbi Chaim arrived at the funeral, he stood before the casket, prepared to ask his forgiveness. Imagine his surprise to find his student alive! The student explained that he owed money to a friend. Since he had not yet paid up, he was denied access to Gan Eden. He asked his mentor to agree to pay on his behalf, in order that he could rest in peace. [I heard that there are others who relate this story in a different way, however, the point remains the same.]

This episode teaches that unity is not a matter of everyone sharing everything with no measure of privacy. Whoever borrows an item is obligated to return it. Our Sages are very strict regarding using others’ property without permission, assuming his friend allows him to use it, is considered a thief. Taking an item in this manner, even if one is certain that his friend would agree, is similar to stealing.

How careful we must be with other people’s possessions! Chazal (Avot 2:12) enjoin us, “Let your fellow’s money be as dear to you as your own.” In spite of the harmony and mutual responsibility which should be prevalent among our nation, each individual has his own private domain, which should be respected by others. One who does not respect his friend’s privacy is an out-and-out thief.



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**Hillulah of  
Tzaddikim**

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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

### Staying up to Celebrate Suitably

One year, as the French gentiles were celebrating Xmas, loud firecrackers and raucous music were heard throughout the night. The noise continued until the sun made its appearance. This is the way the gentiles celebrate.

The noise kept me awake. I made out thousands of revelers making merry in the streets. I thought to myself that these people stay awake all night long only to eat, drink, and be merry. They celebrate their holiday in a drunken stupor, with wild abandon. They end the night in fist-fights and other, even worse forms of violence. It was discovered later that four hundred cars had been torched.

The next morning, I noticed that a certain driver looked like he had stayed up the entire night. He was low on sleep and patience. There is no doubt that he would have liked to sleep at night, but it seems part of the gentile ritual that one can wish his friend a "Happy New Year" only after hours of merry-making and drinking. He could not deviate from the custom of his religion and retire, just because the clock read a late hour.

Am Yisrael, too, l'havdil, have a custom to remain awake on the eve of Shavuot, Hoshana Rabbah, and Seder Night. Moreover, some people have the admirable practice of staying up all night to learn Torah at random times throughout the year.

But the difference between Am Yisrael's remaining awake and that of the nations is the difference between day and night. When the gentiles celebrate an all-nighter, their purpose is to imbibe as much wine and decadence as possible. They pursue physical pleasures with a passion. Conversely, Am Yisrael remain awake out of a sense of sanctity.

They remove sleep from their eyes and delve into the intricacies of the Talmud. As a direct result, they are capable, afterward, of removing another layer of materialism from themselves.

## The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week: **"There was a certain man."** (Shoftim 13)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah describes the nezirut of Shimshon, and the instructions of the navi to his mother concerning the nezirut. This is similar to the parashah which discusses the subject of the nazir and its mitzvot.



## Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

### **Do not be silent!**

A person should not stand by silently while he hears his parents involved in idle gossip. If he does so, says the Tanna D'vei Eliyahu, he and they will not live out the full days of their lives.

Likewise, it is a mitzvah for every person to bring peace between the parties. This is included as one of the things for which a person eats its fruit in this world, while the principal is reserved for him in the World to Come.

## Reasons for Jewish Customs



It is a custom to read Megillat Rut on Shavuot.

There are several reasons for this custom.

The birthday and passing of David Hamelech, a"h, occurred on Shavuot. His lineage is listed at the end of Megillat Rut.

Also, since Rut converted and accepted upon herself the yoke of Torah and mitzvot, we read about her deeds on the chag of Matan Torah.

Another reason is that Rut the Moavite converted after Chazal decided "Moavi (male) and not a Moavite (female)," which signifies that the Oral Torah and the Written Torah are one and the same.



## Words of Wisdom

### Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

#### **Nasso**

It is written, "Take a census of the sons of Gershon" (Bamidbar 4:22).

The book Iturei Torah relates an amazing concept, namely that Parsha Nasso, which is composed of 176 verses, is the longest parsha in the Torah. In parallel to this, Tehillim 119 ("Praiseworthy are those whose way is perfect") is composed of 176 verses. Furthermore, Bava Batra is the longest tractate in the Talmud, containing 176 folios.

Among all the parshiot in the Torah, Parsha Nasso is the subject of the greatest number of commentaries in the midrashim and the Zohar. Since this parsha is read near the festival of Shavuot, the time of the giving of the Torah, our Sages have demonstrated, through their numerous commentaries, their special love for the Torah which they merited to receive.

#### **The Nazir**

It is written, "He shall bring his offering to Hashem" (Bamidbar 6:14).

The gaon Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk taught that the offerings of the Nazir (one who takes a vow of abstinence), which he brings on the day that he shaves himself, is similar to the offerings that were brought by the princes during the inauguration (chanuka) of the altar. Why the similarity? It is because a broken heart is greater than all offerings. Now the aim of the person who decides to be a Nazir is to learn to break his urges and desires, and to train himself (chinuch) in this way. Hence the Nazir would bring the offerings of the inauguration (chanuka).

#### **A Blessing Fulfilled**

It is written, "So shall you bless the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 6:23).

Each morning we have the merit of finding ourselves before the kohanim with their arms extended, and obediently hearing their blessing. Why were the kohanim chosen to bless the Jewish people?

Rabbi Aharon Walkin, the author of Beit Aharon, explains: The Maharsha commented on the formula established by our Sages "to bless His people Israel with love" (Sotah 38b), stating that a blessing is fulfilled in accordance with the desire of the person who says it. It is therefore fitting that the blessing should be said by a person with a positive outlook and who wants to give it.

Thus the effectiveness of a blessing depends on the genuine desire of the person who says it.

Since we cannot claim to be at a level where we love every Jew from the bottom of our heart, G-d chose the kohanim, who are obviously interested in the complete welfare of the Jewish people. In fact the sustenance of the kohanim depends on the offerings of the Jewish people, which they receive as members of the priesthood. Thus the greater the blessing of the Jewish people, the greater their contribution to the kohanim will be. Hence we are assured that their blessing will emanate from the depths of their heart and be fulfilled.

#### **By a Levite**

It is written, "So shall you bless the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 6:23).

It is taught that the priest who is about to spread forth his hands [for the blessing] needs an influx of holiness in addition to his own. He must therefore have his hands washed by one who is himself holy, namely a Levite.

Thus the priest may not receive the sanctification of the washing of hands from any commoner who is not himself sanctified. It may be asked: Why only a Levite? Why should the priest not be sanctified by the hands of another priest?

The answer is: Because the other priest would not be complete, but the Levite is complete, being qualified for his own service, and he is also deemed to be "purified," as it says: "and purify them." Zohar III:146ab

## Treasures

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



### **What We Learn from Tolls**

I always tell myself that wherever I find myself, and whichever situation I am in, is preordained to teach me a lesson. Many highways throughout the world demand a toll in order to ride them. Each highway is divided into lanes. Drivers must pay according to the number of roads that they travel. I was once traveling on such a highway in New Jersey with my companion, Rabbi Moshe Mirali. After a few kilometers of traveling, we were stuck in a traffic jam. We suddenly heard loud shouting and found out that a man was short ten cents for the traffic toll. He was denied access to the highway, causing a backup. When I discovered the cause of the ruckus, I asked Rabbi Mirali to go over to the man and give him ten cents so that we could continue driving. All the cars were backed up for want of ten cents!

This incident gave me pause to think. In this world, we are constantly traveling on a highway, in the direction of the World to Come. We have to pay our way, by means of mitzvot and good deeds. The Torah contains 613 mitzvot, many of which are impossible for each individual to perform. For example, the mitzvah of divorce is one which no one wishes upon himself. How, then, can the Torah command us to fulfill all of its mitzvot? This is exactly why the Torah emphasizes the concept of unity so strongly. Even when one individual does not perform a specific mitzvah for one reason or another, but another Jew does perform it, then, by means of extension, he can be considered to have done it. Mutual responsibility allows the fulfillment of mitzvot by one Jew to be considered as if it had been performed by others. One who gives tzedakah in Lyon, for example, can very likely save the life of a fellow Jew in faraway Australia.

After 120 years, we will arrive at the World of Truth. Hakadosh Baruch Hu will ask for a detailed report of all our deeds in this world. How great will be our humiliation if we will be missing a slight amount of merits, denying us access to Gan Eden! The command to be unified with our fellow man prevents this situation. We can each influence our fellow positively. But when Am Yisrael are not united, they are incapable of influencing each other by means of their mitzvot. How, then, can they expect to face the Heavenly Tribunal?!

# Wellsprings

## Chapters in Child-Raising



As we previously mentioned, a the most influential factor in educating a child is the power of giving. The child is in the process of being formed, physically, emotionally, and through his experiences. He is constantly adding to and reinforcing his feelings and opinions. Whoever is involved in the growth process of the child is able to direct him to the same extent that an educator is able to direct him spiritually, and has tremendous influence in molding his character.

We also mentioned that the Vilna Gaon, zy" a, in his letter, asked his wife, concerning the education of their children, "Always concern yourself over their health and ensure that they should not lack food." It seems that when instructing his wife about their children's education, he mentioned the physical aspect of their care since this is what opens the gate to influencing children spiritually.

Chazal explain that we learn to educate our children through giving from Avraham Avinu, who acted as follows: "But to the sons of the concubines who were Avraham's, Avraham gave gifts; then he sent them away from Yitzchak his son, while he was still alive" (Bereishit 25:6).

Let's pay attention to what Avraham gave his son, Yitzchak.

The previous pasuk tells us: "Avraham gave everything he had to Yitzchak."

The relationship between Yitzchak and Yishmael is clear. To the

latter, Avraham gave "gifts," whereas to Yitzchak his son, he gave "everything he had."

This pasuk reveals that the spiritual inheritance bequeathed by the father to his son corresponds to the extent he gives to his son. Yitzchak was the spiritual inheritor of Avraham due to the fact that "Avraham gave everything he had to Yitzchak." Conversely, by giving the sons of the concubines small gifts, Avraham ensured that they would have minimal connection to his spiritual world.

The correlation between giving and inheriting a spiritual legacy stems from the fact that the inner world of the child is primarily designed by and follows his parents and the home. Simultaneous to receiving his basic physical needs, his emotional world is built. The relationships within the family and the experiences he undergoes as part of his family form the foundation of his intellectual and emotional worlds. A child in the home is in a position of formation and receiving. Through the natural growth and development of the child, the parents can direct him on the correct course to take in life.

Although we are primarily discussing the role of parents in education, this applies to anyone who bestows life. Such a person also merits to direct and form the other person's inner being. Being an educator does not give one the right to have expectations or make demands on the child. Just the opposite. The true educator is one who constantly provides the child with all his physical and emotional needs. As a result of giving, the child is able to be educated for

the good, and to appreciate which is the correct path to take, as well as accept rebuke.

The following account, related by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Pliskin, in his sefer "Yakar Mizolel," illustrates this point beautifully:

When the first wave of Aliyah from Russia began, the "Committee for Spiritual Absorption" was founded. The Mashgiach, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, zt"l, said that instead of giving the new immigrants tallit and tefillin, they should be given apartments and work. Then they would ask for tallit and tefillin of their own accord. In addition, he related that when his brother-in-law (Harav Chaim Kreisworth, zt"l) brought survivors of the Holocaust to his home, he went to the Rav of Brisk, zt"l, and asked him how he should bring them closer to Torah and mitzvot, since these people had forgotten everything they had learned in their parents' homes during those terrible times. The Rav of Brisk answered, "You shouldn't say anything to them, but buy them clothes and treats. Then they will come closer to Yiddishkeit of their own accord."

Similarly, it is related about Maran Hagaon, Harav Shach, zt"l, that if he would speak with a bachur in learning and realize that he was hoarse, he would be as concerned for him as a mother for her son, and tell him to drink warm milk and honey. He would even explain to the bachur how to prepare the drink. All so that he would no longer be hoarse. Sometimes, Harav Shach would even send a jar of honey to the bachur's room so he would drink tea with honey.

## Men of Faith

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

One of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's close friends, who engages in many worthy and charitable deeds, was troubled by the income tax agency. Why?

His bookkeeper was not honest. He charged his clients, but he did not record their income properly. Consequently, the accounts were not in order. Ultimately, someone informed on Moreinu's friend to the income tax agency. The punishment for evading taxes could result in prolonged imprisonment.

The man had faith in Hashem. He knew that he had done no wrong and had paid his taxes promptly. He should have nothing to fear. He lit a candle l'iluy nishmat the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim

Hakatan and prayed that Hashem should help him in the merit of the tzaddik.

One day, the income tax agents arrived unexpectedly at his office in order to check his records. After auditing his accounts, they declared, "Everything is in perfect order! We have never seen such organized accounts anywhere."

In the merit of his abundant charity, Hashem had saved him from harm, rendering the income tax agents as "those who have eyes but cannot see." The merit of tzedakah, in addition to the merit of the tzaddik had protected him.