

## The Path to Follow

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

MASKIL LÉDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita****Man Is Led in the Way He Wishes to Go**

**“Send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel; one man each from his father’s tribe shall you send, every one a leader among them”**(Bamidbar 13:1-2)

The last letters of the words שלח (Send forth, if you please) spell the word כח (strength). And the word שלח written backwards spells חלש (weak). By speaking to Moshe in this way, Hashem was indicating that the sending of the spies would weaken his and the nation’s strength. As long as Bnei Yisrael traveled in the Wilderness, they were led in a most supernatural way. They were surrounded by the Clouds of Glory, which absorbed all arrows thrown at them. They never had to physically enter into battle with their enemies. Sending spies to tour the Land demoted the nation from their elevated spiritual status to a level of living under the laws of nature.

Hashem had originally planned to bestow the Land upon them in a miraculous fashion. But by sending the spies, they indicated that they wished to live by the laws of nature, just like any other nation that is preparing to conquer enemy territory. Hashem changed His course of action, as well, forcing Am Yisrael to inherit the Land just like any other nation. The implied meaning of His words was that this act would weaken their power, as well as their spiritual standing, and they would function, from now on, in a natural manner.

The sefer Shmuel describes David’s supernatural manner of fighting his enemies. He experienced numerous miracles in his victories. Once, his messengers informed him that the Pelishtim were preparing to attack. David immediately conferred with the Urim V’tumim. He was told to wait near the trees. Only after he heard the rustle in the leaves was he to go out to fight the enemy. David obeyed Hashem’s com-

mand. Even though the Pelishtim were advancing and his people were pressing him to fight, David remained unmoved, awaiting the Heavenly signal to wage war. Only when the enemy was a footstep away from David and his men, their sword nearly at their necks, was there a rustle in the leaves. Then David and his men jumped out, subduing the mighty Pelishti army. This incident should teach us the following. The moment a person shows a desire to be led in a supernatural manner, Hashem provides him with special protection, granting him siyata di’Shemaya to overcome all his enemies, without any need to turn to physical acts.

With Moshe’s passing, Yehoshua bin Nun was chosen to lead the people. He sent spies to check out Yericho before attacking that city. Since Yehoshua had altruistic intentions, he merited siyata di’Shemaya, and the walls around Yericho fell simply from the sounds of the shofar blasts. There was no need to fight naturally. The path of one who walks in Hashem’s ways is paved with supernatural success.

We can conclude that Moshe understood that this is what the nation desired. Moshe wished to impart the following lesson. When a person does not heed Hashem’s voice, he will pay the price. There is no escaping Hashem’s command. One who thinks he can outsmart Hashem’s word, veering from the line of duty, is putting his life on the line. Everyone is responsible for his deeds, and the way a person desires to go is the way in which he is led. One who indicates that he wants Hashem to lead him above the laws of nature merits this. But if someone demonstrates an interest in using natural methods to save himself, Hashem removes His Divine protection from him, giving him free reign to manage on his own. The results may prove to be unfortunate.

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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

### It's Not Peanuts

On a flight abroad, a flight attendant offered the passengers packages of nuts, as is common on many flights. When I was offered this snack, I declined. But he probably did not hear my answer, because he repeated his offer. So I repeated my response.

"It is kosher," he tried to assure me.

"How do you know?" I challenged.

He thought for a moment, and then said, in wonder,

"What could it contain already? It's only peanuts!"

I took the package from his hand and opened it. I placed it under his nose and asked if he didn't smell oil.

"You're a hundred percent right!" he agreed. "They smear the peanuts with oil. But doesn't kashrut apply only to meat products? Does oil, too, need a kashrut symbol?"

"Certainly," I answered. "Our G-d commands us to eat only that which the Torah certifies is kosher. We

are ordered to keep away from impure foods. This does not concern only animal meat, but, in essence, everything we put into our mouths! Every food item must be checked to see whether it derives from a pure or an impure source. Even a drop of oil from a non-pure source can render a food forbidden. For this reason, I declined your kind offer of peanuts."

## The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week: **"Yehoshua son of Nun sent..."** (Yehoshua 2:1-24)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah relates the account of the two spies whom Yehoshua sent to spy out the Land. This corresponds to the account of the two spies whom Moshe Rabbeinu sent to spy out the Land.

## Reasons for Jewish Customs



On Shabbat we recite "Uva l'Tzion" during tefillat Minchah, as opposed to during the week, when it is recited during tefillat Shacharit.

One reason for this is not to thus lengthen the tefillah, so as not to place a burden on the elderly, and on the pregnant and nursing women, who would have to fast till a late hour until they finish the tefillah.



## Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

### Extending Ourselves to Preserve Peace

Chazal explain the pasuk "בקש שלום ורדפו" – Seek peace and pursue it" as follows: Seek it for the one you love and pursue it for the one you hate; seek it where you are and pursue it in other places; seek it with your person and pursue it with your money; seek it for yourself and pursue it for others; seek it today and pursue it for tomorrow.

The intention of the Midrash in exhorting us to pursue peace for tomorrow is that we should not relent in our pursuit of peace. Rather, we should pursue it tomorrow, and the day after, and even after that, until we attain it.





## Words of Wisdom

Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

### **There Are Men and There Are Men**

*“Send forth men for yourself, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan”* (Bamidbar 13:2)

“As vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to the one who sent him” (Mishlei 10:26). The spies are infamous for the evil speech they spoke about the Land, as it says, “And they bend their tongues, their bow of falsehood: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth” (Yirmeyahu 9:2).

To what can this be compared?

To a king who had a vineyard. When he sees that the wine is good, he tells his workers: “Bring it into my house.” When he sees that the wine is sour, he tells his workers: “Take it to your homes.”

Similarly, in this case. When Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw the elders who were upright, He connected them to His Name: “Gather to Me seventy men from the elders of Israel” (Bamidbar 11:16). But when He saw the spies, who would in the future sin, He connected them to Moshe’s name: “Send for yourself” (Midrash Tanchuma).

### **An Inheritance in the Merit of Yitzchak**

*“Send forth men for yourself, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan”* (Bamidbar 13:2)

Rabbi Berachiah said in the name of Rabbi Simai: “Why is Canaan mentioned here?”

Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Bnei Yisrael: “It is not because of your righteousness or rectitude that you are inheriting their land. Rather it is because of the wickedness of these people.”

When Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw that Bnei Yisrael did not merit entering the Land, He remembered Yitzchak, who was born to Avraham when the latter was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. This is hinted in the name כנען (Canaan): The letter כּ has the gematria of 20, נ has the gematria of fifty, ע has the gematria of 70, and the final נ has the gematria of 50. When added, this totals 190, the combined ages of Avraham and Sarah when their son Yitzchak was born.

### **Tzitzit – Our Lifeline**

*“So that you shall remember and perform all My commandments and be holy”* (Bamidbar 15:40).

This can be compared to someone drowning in the sea. The captain of a ship threw him a rope and called out, “Grab onto the rope and don’t let go, otherwise you’ll die.”

Thus Hakadosh Baruch Hu said to Israel, “As long as you are attached [to Me] and sanctified, the nations will fear you. But if you separate yourselves from the mitzvot, you are doomed” (Midrash Yelamdeinu). [The word חוללים – doomed, also means desecrated, indicating that by losing one’s sanctity, he is doomed – Ed.]

## Treasures

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



### **The Severity of Lashon Hara**

*“They brought forth to the Children of Israel an evil report on the Land that they had spied out, saying, ‘The Land through which we have passed, to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants! All the people that we saw in it were huge!’”* (Bamidbar 13:32)

When the spies returned from spying out the Land, they gave a negative report to Bnei Yisrael, to the extent that they even said that the Land “devours its inhabitants.” This being the case, they claimed, there was no purpose in entering the Land, since they would soon enough be devoured themselves. As a punishment for accepting the words of the spies, Bnei Yisrael wandered in the Wilderness for forty years instead of entering Eretz Yisrael immediately after Matan Torah. The forty years corresponded precisely to the forty days in which the spies toured the Land.

Lashon hara (slandering speech) can start with something very small and insignificant. It might even be avak lashon hara (lit. the “dust” of negative speech). But it can cause the most terrible consequences, and may even lead to deriding Hakadosh Baruch Hu, rachmana litzlan. The spies began by denigrating the Land alone, but this led to deny Hashem Yitbarach in the end. This is described by the pasuk:

“לא נוכל לעלות אל העם כי חזק הוא ממנו” – We cannot ascend to that people for it is too strong for us!” (Bamidbar 13:31). The word ממנו can either be read as “for us” or “for Him.” Thus the spies were intimating that the people living in the Land of Israel were too strong for Hashem to conquer (Rashi).

To avoid this sort of situation, Chazal forbade speaking even avak lashon hara, since this could cause us to violate many Torah prohibitions, and the speaker would then be liable for them. We see the same idea concerning the fast of the Tenth of Tevet. We keep this fast almost as stringently as the fast of the Ninth of Av. Why? On the Tenth of Tevet the walls of Yerushalayim were merely besieged, whereas on the Ninth of Av the walls were breached, the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, and Bnei Yisrael were exiled. How can we compare the events of the two days, and the fasts that we keep to commemorate them?

The Tenth of Tevet was the beginning of the end. Had the enemy not besieged the walls of Yerushalayim on that day, they would not have finally breached them on the Ninth of Av and destroyed the Beit Hamikdash. The events of the Tenth of Tevet led to the events of the Ninth of Av, thus we fast and mourn on the former just as we do on the latter.

# Wellsprings

## Chapters in Child-Raising



The path to independence and maturity for a child, just as the ability to use one's independence as a young adult, can be strewn with bumps in the road as a result of the various problems and difficulties he faces as part of daily life.

As in many areas of life, the middle path is the best one to take. In other words, complete independence that is beyond the child's grasp and age may cause harm, and ultimately reduce or prevent the effectiveness of the parents' influence on the child. On the other hand, complete dependence on the parents limits the effectiveness of the education the parents instill in the child to the time period he is at home, in the domain of his father and mother.

To counteract these two problems, it is advisable to allow the child, in almost every area, a certain point that he must deal with by himself, with his own abilities, when he is faced with a challenge. Then he will find the path that his parents have led him toward and educated him to follow, by himself.

Let's take the example of the child returning home after school, and sitting at his desk to do the homework assignments that he was given. There are many children, found in almost in every household, who immediately turn to their parents for help with their homework. According to what we have said, the father or mother should not tell the child what to write. They should not read out the answers from the book, or work out his math problems for him. Rather they should tell him where he should look for the answer; they should show him which *pasuk* to study or point out the place in Rashi's explanation where he can find it. The child himself should study this and work out the answer himself and then write it in his exercise-book.

Children are usually curious about what goes on around them, and ask and inquire. As parents, we should answer them according to their understanding. We should not push them off by saying anything that comes to our minds, or with an answer that is not thought out. Or even worse, by saying, "When you will be older, you'll understand," or, "It's too complicated for you." A child's natural curiosity is the seed of his adult self's wisdom.

A child is naturally very sensitive to the feelings of other members of the family, whether at a time of joy, or the

opposite, *chalilah*, and he wants to understand what is going on. We should include him in these emotions rather than allowing him to be isolated, wondering what is happening and not understanding anything. This will block the development of his intellect, and he will feel it is not worth broadening his understanding even in those subjects that he is learning at school.

The following is a wonderful idea presented by the master educator, Rabbi Yitzchak Rabi, *shlita*, in his sefer "Le'ahov":

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is to involve them in what is going on in the home. When children share their parents' concerns as well as the regular things that happen within the family, they feel important and connected.

When a parent shares these experiences with his child, the child will in turn share his experiences with the parent. When parents share their feelings and worries with their child, he will learn to identify his own feelings and to share them with his family and friends.

When parents do not share what is happening at home with their child, they are preventing him from expressing his own feelings. They are also preventing their child from developing positive communication with them, his parents.



## Men of Faith

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

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu's brother-in-law, R' Pinchas Amos, relates an amazing story:

It was the first time that his grandmother from Casablanca was going to request a blessing from Rabbi Chaim. She came to his house and asked him to give her a blessing. She also offered him a sum of money as a *pidyon nefesh*.

To her surprise, Rabbi Chaim refused to accept the money for the *pidyon*. "From you, I will not accept money," he told her.

"Why not?" she dared to ask.

"Because you fast from *Motza'ei Shabbat* until *Erev*

*Shabbat*, and you are held in high esteem in Heaven. Therefore, I do not want to take money from you. On the contrary, I want you to bless me."

The words of the *tzaddik*, said in utmost modesty, greatly impressed the grandmother. She ventured to question the *tzaddik*, "From where does your honor know that I fast all week?"

"It was revealed to me by Heaven," Rabbi Chaim answered her, "and therefore I will bless you, but I request that you bless me as well."