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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

The Path to Follow



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

Mitzvot – Precondition to Possessing the Land

“For you are crossing the Jordan, to come to possess the land which Hashem, your G-d, is giving you, and you shall possess it and dwell in it. And you ensure to perform all the statutes and ordinances that I am setting before you today” (Devarim 11:31-32)

Hakadosh Baruch Hu stipulated that inheritance of the Land is contingent on observance of the mitzvot that He was giving Am Yisrael this day. The Land itself, as it were, also observes the Torah and is affected by mitzvah observance. Evidence for that is seen throughout the Navi, there are numerous allusions to comforting the Land; this is an additional request we insert at the end of Shemoneh Esrei on Tishah B'Av: “He who comforts Tzion.”

How can land be comforted? Granted that a people, a nation can be comforted, as the Navi Yeshaya cries out (Yeshaya 40:1), “Comfort, comfort, My nation.” He bewails the status of his people who have been exiled and suffer so much, and offers them solace. But how can one comfort an inanimate object like earth?

The answer is that there are many mitzvos associated with Eretz Yisrael, a land on a different caliber from all others. Two examples of these Land-related mitzvos are: appointing a king and Shemittah. When these mitzvos are upheld, the Land is comforted and is capable of containing its people. This is borne out in the pasuk (Vayikra), “If you will go in My statutes... you shall dwell in security on your Land.” Mitzvah observance guarantees the security of those who live in Eretz Yisrael. This is why inheriting the Land is conditional upon upholding the mitzvot.

The pesukim continue (Devarim 12:2-5), “You shall utterly destroy from all the places where the nations that you shall possess, worshipped their gods, upon the lofty mountains and upon the hills, and under every lush tree. And you shall tear down their altars, smash their monuments, burn their sacred trees with fire, cut down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name from that place. You shall not do so to Hashem your G-d. But only to the place which the Hashem your G-d shall choose from all your tribes, to set His Name

there; you shall inquire after His dwelling and come there.” The Torah contrasts inquiring after His dwelling to destroying the avodah zarah of the gentiles. Am Yisrael is being warned to forsake all forms of idol-worship and, instead, seek Hashem’s Shechinah in the Beit Hamikdash.

Avodah zarah is not merely the worship of idols. Anything materialistic that a person loves and is deeply connected with is a form of avodah zarah. Instead of directing every ounce of love toward Hashem, his loyalties are divided between Him and a foreign object. All worldly pleasures are considered idolatry and must be abandoned at all cost. In their place, one should search for the Shechinah in the Beit Hamikdash.

How can the Torah demand that one exchange his pursuit of materialistic pleasures for spiritual quests? Materialism offers a measure of contentment. Where can he gain this feeling in Avodat Hashem? The above-mentioned pesukim teach us that, indeed, true tranquility is found only in Torah and Avodat Hashem. The Beit Hamikdash is the place for genuine fulfillment.

Anyone who tried his hand at understanding a paragraph of Gemara or Tosafot can attest to this. His heart was filled with joy and satisfaction. It is precisely this prescription that brings a person real peace of mind, above and beyond what anything materialistic can offer.

There was once a Jew who intended to sin. That evening, before the agreed-upon hour, we had arranged a shiur Torah. It was promised that whoever came to the shiur would be allowed to make any request afterward, and Hashem would hopefully fulfill his wishes. When the man heard this, he decided to participate. After the shiur, I asked him what he wanted. He said that all he wanted was to become stronger in Torah and yirat Shamayim. After sampling a taste of Torah, all thoughts of frivolity flew out of his head.

In order to merit gaining new levels in Ahavat Torah (love of Torah), one must shed copious tears and beg Hashem to arouse his heart to come closer to Him.



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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

- 30 Rabbi Chamani Alush
- 1 Rabbi David Hanaggid
- 2 Rabbi Yitzchak Bar-Sheshet
- 3 Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook
- 4 Rabbi Meir Simcha Hakohen
- 5 Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy"ta
- 6 Rabbi Yitzchak Hadayah



Walking in their Ways

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

Firm Faith Destroys Decrees

Rabbeinu David Chanania Pinto, shlita, has a friend abroad who is like a brother to him. Before the Rav even asks for a donation, this man knows how much money he needs in order to uphold Torah institutions. This man has donated massive sums of money to the Rav, numerous times, in order to cover his debts.

For many years, this man was childless. Once, as he was offering the Rav a large amount of money, the Rav turned to him, "Moshe, this is really more than you can afford. Why are you giving me so much money?"

"Had I had children, I'd have a reason to save my money. But since I don't, what's the point of saving up my money? Its better the Rav and the Torah institutions should benefit from this money." The man then burst into bitter tears. His wife wept along with him. And the Rav and his daughter, who was with him, joined them in crying. They shared the pain of this broken couple.

The Rav didn't know how he could properly express his gratitude to this philanthropic individual. That day, he was

scheduled to fly to France. He opened his suitcase and removed two suits and two shirts. He handed them to the man with the words, "Keep these items of clothing in your possession. If Hashem sees fit to give you a child, I will come to visit you. I will not need to bring clothing, as you will have a suit of clothing of mine in your house."

The man jumped at the opportunity and exclaimed, "If the Rav is leaving by me two changes of clothes, that it must be a sign that I will have two children."

The Rav said, "If only that Hashem would give you even one child! And yet you are asking for two?"

The man did not agree with this reasoning. "No. If now is a propitious time for making a request, I ask for two children."

The Rav answered him, "If so, begin praying."

And everyone in the room then joined him in prayer. They concluded with a hearty, "L'Chaim" to concretize the berachah.

A month later, the man excitedly called up the Rav. "Rabbi David, your suits and shirts are freshly laundered and pressed.

They are awaiting the Rav's arrival within the coming year."

"What are you referring to?" the Rav asked, surprised.

"Honored Rav, my wife is expecting twins!"

Upon which, the Rav cried out, "Yisrael is never forsaken!"

This was in the merit of the man's faith. How true are the words of the Sages, "Charity saves one from death." One who has no children is considered dead. In merit of the huge sums of tzedakah that this man gave, Hashem rescued him from true death and he was given children.

The Rav adds, "This came not in the merit of my blessing, but only in the merit of this man's simple faith. I left with him two suits of clothing. I offered him no promise, just a window of hope. Our job is to give people hope. In the merit of his great faith, Hashem helped him."

Baruch Hashem, three months ago, his wife gave birth to a boy and girl. I was the sandek at the brit. May Hashem help him, and may he merit having more children, Amen.

The Haftarah



"O poor tempestuous one, who was not consoled"

(Yeshaya 54:11)

This is one of seven haftarot of consolation which are read consecutively, beginning with the Shabbat after Tishah B'Av. These haftarot contain words of comfort for Am Yisrael after their tragic loss.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

The Severity of Lashon Hara

Rabbi Akiva said: Anyone who speaks negatively before Hashem or says lashon hara about Am Yisrael will receive a terrible punishment, even if he is a great tzaddik. There was no greater tzaddik in the generation than Eliyahu. Nevertheless, because he spoke derogatorily about Am Yisrael, he was severely punished. What does it say about him? "Behold, upon his head is a pile of coals." Hashem says, "This one who speaks lashon hara deserves to be fed coals" (Zohar Chadash 21b).

Reasons for Jewish Customs



In Ashkenazi communities, it is customary to blow the shofar from Rosh Chodesh Elul after Shacharit throughout the entire month. (The custom in Sephardic communities is to blow the shofar during the recitation of the Thirteen Middot during Selichot.)

This custom has its roots in Moshe's ascent to Heaven. He ascended on Rosh Chodesh Elul in order to receive the second set of luchot. At that time, a shofar was sounded throughout the camp. For this reason, it was instituted to sound the shofar every year, throughout Elul, in order to warn Bnei Yisrael to do teshuvah.



Words of Wisdom

Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

Most Precious of All

“And Hashem has chosen you to be a treasured people for Him, out of all the nations” (Devarim 14:2)

This pasuk teaches us that each and every Jew is more precious to Hashem than all the nations. Are we more precious even than previous nations? The words “of all the nations upon the land” teach us that we are more precious than any nation who was ever on the face of the earth (Yalkut Shimoni).

What’s in a Name?

“And the white vulture and the black vulture” (Devarim 14:13)

The Midrash Rabbah relates:

ראה – Rabbi Abahu says that the white vulture is the bird known in Hebrew as איה. Why then is it called called by the name ראה, because it sees (רואה) more than any other bird. This bird stands in Bavel and can see a carcass located in Eretz Yisrael.

שלך – Rabbi Yehuda says this bird pulls out (שולה) fish from the sea

חסידה – This is a white stork. Rabbi Yehuda says it is called חסידה because it does acts of kindness (חסד) with its kin.

אנפה – The heron is called אנפה because it is frequently angry at its friends. (The word אנפה is related to התאנף – became angered, as it says “ה’ התאנף בי – Hashem became angry at me”).

דוכיפת – Rabbi Yehuda says the hoopoe’s comb is shaped like a palm (כפות).

(Midrash Rabbah)

Hishtadlut (Effort) is Necessary

“So that Hashem, your G-d will bless you in all the work of your hand that you will do” (Devarim 14:29)

In Tanna d’Vei Eliyahu, we read: I was once traveling from place to place. I met a man who knew Mikrah (Scripture) but not Mishnah. He said to me, “Rebbi! I would like to share something with you, but I’m afraid you’ll be angered.”

I said to him, “Chas v’shalom that I should get angry regarding a question in Torah!”

He said to me, “Rebbi, why does it say, ‘He gives bread to all flesh’ (Tehillim 136:25), and also, ‘He gives the animal its bread’ (ibid. 147:9)? Doesn’t man prepare his own bread?”

I said to him, “man toils for his food and Hashem blesses his handiwork, as it says, ‘So that Hashem, your G-d will bless you in all the work of your hand that you will do.’ Does this mean that a person can sit idle and Hashem will take care of his sustenance? The words, “that you will do,” teach us that man must work for his living.”

(Midrash Tehillim)

Treasures

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



Mitzvat Tzedakah

“For there will never cease to be needy within the land. Therefore, I command you, saying, you shall surely open your hand to your brother, to your poor one, and to your needy one in your land” (Devarim 15:11)

Poverty is part and parcel of the Jewish nation. In every generation, the curse of poverty will visit our nation. Hashem purposely arranged this in order to teach Am Yisrael to open their hands and offer succor to their fellow Jews. Becoming habituated to giving tzedakah engrains Hashem’s characteristic of mercy in the hearts of Am Yisrael. They learn not to lord over their less-fortunate brethren. Chazal tell us that Am Yisrael specializes in three qualities. They are merciful, bashful, and do acts of kindness. Paupers are never neglected. The previous pasuk states that if Am Yisrael diligently gives tzedakah, Hashem will bless them with abundance, as it says (Devarim 15:10), “Hashem will bless you in all your work and all your endeavors.” Chazal have extrapolated from the pasuk, “You shall surely tithe” the following: “You shall tithe in order that you become wealthy.” (The words tithe and wealth have the same root word – עשר.) Let no one think that donating to charity decreases his holdings. On the contrary, blessing abounds among the assets of the generous.

How does one successfully offer of his assets to charity? By diminishing his passion for more money; by regarding finances as a means, not an end. In the days of Shlomo Hamelech, the streets were filled with money. Precious gems were considered ordinary stones lining the roads. This is because the people focused on Torah and were not carried away by materialism. The nation reflected the values of their righteous king, Shlomo, who renounced money in favor of knowledge of Hashem. When Hashem saw that Shlomo was not interested in physical prowess or worldly pleasures, He offered him all three gifts: wisdom, wealth, and power over his enemies.

I know of a Jew in Argentina who signed a deal regarding a large sum of money. To his misfortune, the deal fell through and he lost a great amount of money. The man asked me to pray for him to extricate himself from the mess he was in. If he would manage to recoup his losses, he promised, he would give me half.

I thought to myself that if this, indeed, would happen, I would find myself a millionaire overnight. I would manage to do numerous mitzvot with this money.

Nonetheless, I did not agree to his suggestion. Such a sum of money was out of my league. I would only get tangled up in it. I therefore wished the man success and sent him on his way. With Hashem’s kindness, the man’s business saw success above and beyond his wildest imagination. It did not enter my mind to ask him for even a cent. This is in line with the pasuk in Mishlei (30:8), “Give me neither poverty nor wealth; provide me my allotted bread.”



The Tzadik Rabbi Moshe Aaron Pinto Zatsal

A special essay in honor of the hilula of the Admor, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy" a, as heard from his son, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu HaGaon HaTzaddik Rabbi David Chanania Pinto, shlita:

Chazal have taught, "Greater are the righteous in their death than in their lifetime." Until today we still recount the deeds and wonders that the tzaddik did during his life and even after death. His way of life and holy activities are like a light to our feet. We try to walk in his ways of Torah, for he had a paved path in his Avodat Hashem.

It is customary to believe that a tzaddik's greatness is measured by the miracles and wonders that he performs. But emphasis must be placed on his holy ways of behavior. His wholeheartedness and faithful manner of serving Hashem must be studied. His self-sacrifice in mitzvah performance must be scrutinized. This is the main feature of the tzaddik. When Hashem sees his self-sacrifice and willingness to do His will wholeheartedly, He repays him measure for measure by fulfilling his will, in line with the pasuk, "He does the will of those who fear Him." For when it is said "the tzaddik decrees and Hakadosh Boruch Hu fulfills (the decree of the tzaddik)"; when the tzaddik fulfills what Hakadosh Boruch Hu decreed (the Torah). The most noteworthy feature of tzaddikim is that their lives are one saga of serving Hashem.

This is how our master and father, zt"l, served Hashem. He delved in the Torah to the last of his strength, diverting sleep from his eyes. His scrupulousness in guarding his eyes and tongue were known by all. For forty years, Father never left his house. His days were sanctified for Torah and tefillah. He accepted all suffering with love. Despite the poverty that reigned in his home, he never uttered a word of complaint. Mother, may she live long, would tell us that sometimes there was not a slice of bread in the house. The family would go to sleep hungry. Father's way was to be satisfied with little, similar to Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa who sufficed on a measure of carob from one week to the next. However, when it came to others, Father offered generous blessings that they should merit wealth and plenty.

I remember, as a young child, how Father would purchase a small bottle of soda for Shabbat. He would dole out a small amount to each of us, all

the while citing, "Lichvod Shabbat." During the week, water was all there was to drink. I recall someone once presenting us with a small bottle of whisky. Father would taste it only on Shabbat. He would explain, "Since this drink is expensive, and therefore uncommon, I will use it to honor the Shabbat."

A Miniature Beit Midrash

A man once approached my father and teacher, zy" a, asking him the following: "There are great tzaddikim who stand at the helm of well-known yeshivot. They have many disciples. However, your yeshiva is hardly known. Where is your yeshiva and where are your disciples?"

Father did not balk for a moment and calmly replied, "My yeshiva is my home. My students are my sons and daughters."

Upon hearing this response, I smiled to myself. What kind of a yeshiva is that?

After some time, I understood Father's deep meaning. I was stunned by the pure wisdom and truth contained in his words.

Every Jew's home is a miniature Beit Midrash. It is a yeshiva where he raises his sons to be talmidei chachamim and his daughters to be righteous women. He himself is the Rosh Yeshiva. He has the privilege and responsibility to guide his children on the right path. Father's words were ever so true.

Not every person merits being a Rosh Yeshiva. Not everybody can produce disciples who will disseminate Torah. But every person has the ability to transform his home into a yeshiva and a miniature Beit Hamikdash, where he officiates as the Rosh Yeshiva. When he raises his family in the spirit of the Torah, he produces disciples of note.

Perfect Protection

The hilula falls during the week of the reading of Parashat Shoftim, which opens with the words, "You shall set up judges and law enforcement officials by all your gates." Rabbi Chaim Vital comments: Man is obligated to place watchmen upon the 'gates' of his body, in order to prevent impurity from infiltrating. He should guard his mouth from speaking negatively and

from eating non-kosher food. He should guard his ears from hearing evil speech. He should guard his eyes from seeing inappropriate sights.

At every stage in life, Father behaved this way. He placed guards at the gates of his body. He was extremely meticulous in mitzvot and modest in his attire. I never saw him roll up his sleeves. His every word was measured and calculated. When he would find us laughing or telling jokes, he would become very angry. "Why are you wasting your time?!" he would demand. This is how Father guided us in Avodat Hashem.

Every so often, another sample of his Avodat Hashem comes to light. He did his holy actions with utmost secrecy, walking modestly before Hashem. He was especially careful with the mitzvah of tzedakah. He gave charity discreetly, for the sake of Heaven and not with any thoughts of personal glory.

Mrs. Lasry, may she live long, related the following: Her mother, Sa'adah Sabach, a" h, was busy raising four young children, but had nowhere to live. Father, zy" a, opened his house wide to afford them rent-free living quarters for long periods of time. He also made sure they had all their needs met. This was without fanfare. Nobody was even aware of it. In order for the woman not to feel uncomfortable, Father found her a job in the house. It was some easy chore, so that she should feel she was earning her keep. This is true chessed, done l'shem Shamayim with no ulterior motives. The wonder of the story is that this woman passed away in Ashdod, on the day of my father's hilula!

There is great benefit in retelling these stories. We should know how Father conducted himself, living solely for Hashem's sake. Hashem, in turn, fulfilled his wishes.

May his tremendous zechut stand by his wife, the tzaddekhet Mazal Pinto, may she live long, his children, grandchildren, the entire family and all of Am Yisrael, to merit all forms of salvation, Amen.