

Ki Tavo

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666

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David



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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 L'David

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

Attachment to Torah

"But Hashem did not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see, or ears to hear until this day"

(Devarim 29:1-3)

Rashi explains "a heart to know" as the ability to recognize Hashem's kindnesses and adhere to Him. However, could it be that until that day, Hashem had not granted them the ability to appreciate His kindnesses? Rashi explains that on that day, Moshe gave a Sefer Torah to the tribe of Levi (Parashat Vayelech 31:9). Am Yisrael was extremely agitated, and said, "Moshe Rabbeinu, we, too, stood at Har Sinai and received the Torah. Why does Shevet Levi take preference over the rest of us?" When Moshe heard this, he was very pleased. He proclaimed (ibid., 27:9), "This day you have become a people to Hashem." He said that now he saw their true adherence to Hashem.

Until that time, Bnei Yisrael had not yet demonstrated joy at receiving the Torah. But when they came before Moshe with their grievance toward him for bestowing the Torah only upon Shevet Levi, they broadcasted their desire to adhere to Hashem. They, too, stood at the foot of Har Sinai, they claimed, their voices calling out, "Na'aseh V'nishma!". On that day, Moshe joyously called out, "Today you have become a nation."

The more a person demonstrates his desire to go in the ways of Hashem, Hashem helps him succeed. Moshe pointed out to Bnei Yisrael, with the words "But Hashem did not give you a heart to know, or eyes to see," that Hashem had already demonstrated His great strength before Bnei Yisrael through the many mighty miracles which He had performed for them in Egypt. He now expected their children to take a lesson from these wonders and uphold their share in the Torah and in closeness to Him.

When a person gives someone directions, he does not walk him to his destination. He

merely points him in the right direction, assuming that he will follow his instruction. Through opening their eyes and hearts to His wonders, Hashem showed Am Yisrael the right path. What was left for them to do was to travel this road, coming ever closer to Him, one step at a time.

Rav Sa'adyah Gaon would perform the self-flagellation of rolling in the snow. When asked to explain his unusual behavior, he replied with the following: Every day, he lamented the fact that he had not merited recognizing Hashem previously, as he had at the present. Had he understood Hashem's greatness the day before, he certainly would have served him more genuinely and wholeheartedly. He was punishing himself for this lack of clarity.

When Bnei Yisrael approached Moshe with the claim that they, too, stood at Sinai and received the Torah, they were in essence expressing their strong desire to cleave to Hashem. After having witnessed the mighty miracles which Hashem performed for them, they were aroused to fulfill their part in Avodat Hashem. With this assertion, they proved that they were worthy of being Hashem's Chosen Nation. Moshe bestowed the Torah on Shevet Levi first, in order to test Bnei Yisrael's loyalty. Would they stand up and demand their share of the Torah? Did they appreciate its true value?

Chazal teach that one who takes control of himself to study Torah, gains control over the entire world. Bnei Yisrael internalized this message and therefore wished to receive the Torah. They wanted to have a share in upholding the world which was nurtured by the power of the holy words of the Torah. This is a primary principle for the entire world. Whoever wishes to adhere to Hashem and impact the world in a meaningful way should connect with the Torah, the force that injects life and strength into everything.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

21 - Rabbi Aharon Abuchatzera

22 - Rabbi Yehudah Ben Simchon

23 - Rabbi Yehudah Meir Getz

24 - Rabbi Yisrael Meir Hakohen,
author of the "Chafetz Chaim"

25 - Rabbi Yechiel Michel
MiZlotchov

26 - Kevod Kedushat Maran Rabbi
Chaim Pinto Hagadol, zya"ta

27 - Rabbi Sar Shalom MiBelz



Walking in their Ways

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

Foreign Exchange

Mr. Shlomo Asseraf, z"l, was related to my host in Morocco, R' Mordechai Knafo, may he live long. Mr. Asseraf would participate in the hilula for the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a, in Morocco, together with his entire family. He would generate enthusiasm, arousing the throngs in prayer and celebration.

One year, the day before the hilula, his daughter swallowed a coin. All x-rays showed the coin dangerously close to her lungs. This posed a serious danger to her life.

Mr. Asseraf hurried to phone me, relating the incident that had occurred. He added that since the coin was lodged in a precarious position, the doctors recommended she be flown to France as quickly as possible. There, specialists would perform surgery to remove the coin. Since the situation was life-threatening, they could not postpone the surgery, and his family would have to cancel their plans to join in the hilula festivities.

I was greatly pained at his words, and told him, "You always bring such joy to the event. How can you even consider not participating this year? Your absence will be keenly felt and detract from the entire atmosphere!"

"But how can I endanger my daughter's life?" he asked.

I replied, "Come with your entire family. You will yet see Hashem's salvation."

Mrs. Asseraf was very worried for her daughter. She had an especially close relationship with this girl, born after many boys, in the merit of my father's blessing. She was very concerned about delaying the operation.

Since I asked Mr. Asseraf to remain in Morocco, the family turned to various hospitals there. Maybe they could treat the girl without having to fly her to France. Maybe a miracle would occur and the coin would move to a less dangerous spot. But all of the x-rays showed the same thing. The coin was stuck in place, not budging an inch.

Suddenly, at 3:00 a.m., I received a call from them when I was at the Knafo home. They asked for permission to travel to France as the doctors had suggested, although it entailed missing the hilula.

Seeing their great distress and anxiety over the girl's fate, I told them, "Take one last x-ray. If the coin is still in the same place, you have my permission to travel to France. But if it moved, come to the hilula in Mogador, as originally planned."

They took another x-ray, hoping against hope that it would reveal new results. To their utter amazement, the coin was completely gone! They took more x-rays, which all revealed that the coin had disappeared.

Their joy knew no bounds, and they hurried to the hilula in Mogador. They kept their miracle to themselves, as they made their way to the cemetery. Since it was very early in the morning, the gate was still locked. The watchman handed them the key, and they danced their way to the grave of the tzaddik.

Imagine their astonishment at finding a coin exactly like the one the girl had swallowed sitting on top of the grave of Rabbi Chaim.

When the crowds began coming, the family told their amazing story. They publicized the miracle of the coin which had disappeared, only to appear once again on the grave of the tzaddik.

When I arrived in Mogador, I immediately sensed the joy in the air. Observing the family's uninhibited ebullience, I understood that something great had occurred. Their story caused a tremendous kiddush Hashem, for the obvious hashgachah pratit that occurred pointed to the power of faith.

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

"Arise! Shine!"

The connection to this Shabbat: This haftarah is part of the seven consecutive haftarot of comfort read on the seven Shabbatot following Tishah B'Av.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Experiencing Deliverance Through Finding Merit

We find in the story of Gideon ben Yoash that in his days the Jews were in great trouble, and Hashem sought a man who would find merit for Am Yisrael, but no one did so, because the generation was weak in mitzvot and good deeds. Ultimately, Gideon was deemed worthy, since he found merit. Immediately an angel appeared to him, as it says, "Then Hashem turned to him and said, 'Go with this strength of yours and you shall save Israel.'" He was deemed worthy because he found merit for Hashem's children.

Reasons for Jewish Customs



When one goes to a tzaddik, it is customary to list everyone's names on a note, and then the tzaddik mentions all their names in a general blessing.

The source for this can be found in the holy Zohar. When there is judgment in the world [as on Rosh Hashanah], a person should not mention his name individually before Hashem, because then also his faults will be recalled. Therefore, people are mentioned collectively to be blessed together.



Words of Wisdom

Midrashim of Chazal on Parshat Hashavua

Listening to Hashem Causes our Prayers to be Heard

“It shall be that if you hearken to the voice of Hashem” (Devarim 28:1)

If you will be attentive and listen, your prayers will be heard, as in the example of Choni Hama’agel (the circle drawer). When Yisrael needed rain, the people said to Choni, the circle drawer, pray for rain to fall. What did he do? He drew a circle and stood within it, in fulfillment of the verse (Chabakuk 2), “I will stand upon my watch.”

Rain then began to drip, and thereupon he exclaimed: It is not for this that I have prayed, but for rain of benevolence. The rain then fell in the normal way.

What caused his prayers to be heard by Hashem?

Because he hearkened to the words of Torah.

(Midrash Tanchuma)

Not Standing Up to Them

“It shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall erect these stones” (Devarim 27:4)

See how many miracles were performed on that day:

Bnei Yisrael crossed the Jordan. They arrived at mount Gerizim and mount Eval, thus traversing a distance of more than sixty mil. No creature was able to withstand them and whoever withstood them immediately emptied their bowels out of great fear; as it is said (Shemot 23), “I will send My terror before you” etc.

After that they brought the stones, built the altar, and plastered it with plaster, and inscribed on it all the words of the Torah in seventy languages; as it is said (Devarim 27) “well clarified.” Then they sacrificed burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, ate and drank and rejoiced, pronounced the blessings and the curses, packed up the stones, and came and lodged in their place, as it says (Yehoshua 4), “Bring them across with you and set them in the lodging place where you will spend the night.”

(Pesikta Zutrata)

The Merits of Eretz Yisrael

“Hashem shall open for you His storehouse of goodness” (Devarim 28:12)

Rabbi Chisda said: Since the day when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed – rain no longer comes down from the “storehouse of goodness,” as it says, “Hashem shall open for you His storehouse of goodness” etc.

When Am Yisrael are settled in their own Land, the rains fall from the “storehouse of goodness,” and when Am Yisrael are not settled in their own Land, the rains do not fall from the “storehouse of goodness.”

(Yalkut Shimoni)

Treasures

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



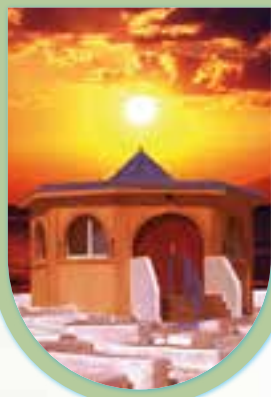
Inscribed in Stone

“It shall be on the day that you cross the Jordan to the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, you shall set up great stones for yourself and you shall coat them with plaster. You shall inscribe on them all the words of this Torah, when you cross over, so that you may enter the land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, spoke about you” (Devarim 27:2-3)

Since the survival of the Land is dependent upon the Torah, Bnei Yisrael were adjured to write it down upon the stones of the earth. Just as stones come from the earth, so is man created from the earth. When future generations would gaze upon these stones, they would be struck by their potent message. Where did they come from and to where will they return? What is their purpose in Eretz Yisrael? What is the driving force which gives them the energy to endure in the Land?

Rabbeinu Bachya adds (Devarim 27:3) that it is the power of Torah which enabled Bnei Yisrael to capture the Land. The merit of Torah afforded them strength to ward off their enemies. In order for a person to feel true joy in the Promised Land, in spite of the adage (see Berachot 5a) that “Eretz Yisrael is acquired with suffering,” one must fulfill the mitzvot willingly and with joy, not as if he were forced into it. When one fulfills this imperative, he will experience only the pleasantness of settling the Land and will be spared the suffering of tribulations.

The Yetzer Hara is hard as stone. The only way to overcome him is by learning Torah, which is inscribed on stone. The Torah diminishes the power of the Yetzer Hara, but does not completely eradicate it. The Yetzer Hara wears many hats. He comes to a person in a different disguise each time. One must take this subject to heart, constantly standing vigil against his Yetzer Hara. Hashem tells us (Kidushin 30b), “I created the Yetzer Hara; I created Torah as its antidote.”



On the Occasion of his Hilula on the 26th of Elul

The pure and shining flame of the tzaddik, the “ner hama’aravi”, the holy mekubal, Rabbi Chaim Pinto HaGadol, zya”a, shone forth already in his youth, when he accepted upon himself to live a life of Torah and sanctity as he had seen and received in the house of his holy forefathers, zya”a. The name of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was lauded throughout the land, and he became famous among the Jews of Morocco. The native Arabs also greatly respected him and considered him a holy miracle-worker.

The blessings of the tzaddik that emanated from his pure mouth brought about miracles and salvation, as we know, “a tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills [the decree].” These are miracles and deliverance that many Jews merited witnessing even in our days when people ascended to his sacred grave and supplicated in prayer before Hashem to be granted salvation in the merit of the tzaddik, the miracle-worker, Maran Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya”a.

Such is the story of Mrs. Georgette Elkayam, tichyeh, who traveled a few years ago to Morocco in order to pray at the graves of the tzaddikim. Her taxi driver mocked her, “Why are you going to visit dead people? You don’t have anything better to do? Go visit living people!”

Mrs. Elkayam responded, “In that case, I do not need your services anymore.”

“Why?” asked the driver.

“Because tomorrow I plan to travel to Mogador to the grave of the saintly Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol, and I see that you do not appreciate going to such places. So, I prefer taking a different driver, who appreciates and respects tzaddikim, since even in their deaths they are considered living.”

The Moroccan driver continued scorning Mrs. Elkayam for wasting her time and money by visiting graves. While he was speaking, his face suddenly became paralyzed. His features became distorted, and he could not utter a single word.

He realized that he had done something wrong by degrading Torah scholars and showing contempt for tzaddikim, who even in their deaths are considered living.

The driver regretted his inappropriate behavior and immediately gave Mrs. Elkayam candles to light at the grave of the tzaddik, begging her to ask for his forgiveness. Mrs. Elkayam quickly traveled to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, in order to sanctify Hashem’s Name in public. She was successful in achieving her goal.

While at the grave of the tzaddik, she called the cell phone of the driver and informed him that she was praying for him there. A miracle occurred. At that moment, the paralysis that had struck him vanished completely, as if it had never occurred, and he began to speak normally. He, of course, thanked Mrs. Elkayam for her prayers on his behalf. He thanked Hashem and the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. He took upon himself to be careful from that time on to honor the tzaddikim, who are more powerful in their deaths than in their lives.

Pronounce My Name

Many people ask all the time, what is the secret hidden in mentioning the name of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya”a. It is no secret that many salvations occurred over hundreds of years by praying that in the merit of the tzaddik the prayers should be answered. In the book “Men of Faith,” many stories of miracles were publicized which had taken place in the merit of the tzaddik who had brought about wondrous miracles in his life, and continues to do so after his death as well. It seems that already in his lifetime Rabbi Chaim bequeathed this wonderful segulah to his disciple, Rabbi Massoud ben Ahbu, zt”l, one of the wise scholars of Marrakesh, who would frequently come to the city of Mogador.

On one such occasion, he came to visit his Rav, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and requested the tzaddik’s blessings for a safe trip.

He was taken aback when Rabbi Chaim refused to bless him and furthermore, instructed him not to leave the city.

Two days later, Rabbi Massoud came to Rabbi Chaim again, hoping this time to receive his blessings for a safe trip home. However, to his astonishment, Rabbi Chaim refused to bless him and again forbade him to leave the city.

On Thursday, the third time that Rabbi Massoud came to the Rav, he told Rabbi Chaim that he had to start back home in order to reach his house in Marrakesh before the commencement of Shabbat. Rabbi Chaim suggested, “Since I see that you are in a rush to return home and do not want to wait any longer, go. However, if you will encounter danger, cry out to me and call my name. Even if you will be far away, pronounce my name, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and you will experience unbelievable miracles.”

Rabbi Massoud nodded in consent and took Rabbi Chaim’s words to heart.

In the midst of his journey, highway robbers attacked his wagon. They prepared to kill him and steal all his possessions. Then, Rabbi Massoud remembered Rabbi Chaim’s advice and began to call loudly, praying that the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto should protect him.

All of a sudden, the thugs heard an unexpected noise and a voice was heard from a distance shouting, “Thieves, thieves!” Panic broke out among them, and they feared for their lives. They abandoned Rabbi Massoud and fled in terror. Rabbi Massoud recovered from his shock and realized that Hashem had miraculously saved him. The merit of the tzaddik had protected his life. When he arrived home safely, he told his family about the great miracle that he had experienced.

I Will Not Leave You

The flame was extinguished on the twenty-sixth of Elul, 1845 (5605), but not before the tzaddik requested that his students continue to strengthen themselves in the observance of Torah and mitzvot, promising them explicitly:

“I will continue to stand in prayer before Hashem after I die, just as I did during my lifetime. I will not abandon you in my death, as I did not abandon you in my life.”

Rabbi Chaim was buried in the old cemetery in Mogador. May his memory be a shield and protector for us and for all Am Yisrael to shower upon us goodness and blessing. May we merit being signed and sealed in the Book of Life and peace, meriting the joyous occasion of the final redemption. Amen.