

Pachad David

Published by **Mosdot Orot Chaim U'Moshe** in Israel

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**

Lessons from the Lives of the Avot

“And Lot journeyed from the East; thus they parted, one from his brother”

(Bereishit 13:8-11)

The parshiyot which relate to the Avot Hakedoshim are more than just stories. When we read these parshiyot and learn about the Avot Hakedoshim and the events of their lives, we are actually finding the guideposts which point us in the direction of Hashem's will. By observing their actions and taking note of their good middot, every Jew, from any walk of life, can learn from their righteous behavior how to act. A close look at the world around us shows the Divine design and individual purpose that each object or creature inherently has. What is the purpose of a Jew? To grow in Avodat Hashem until he can become self-reliant and capable in serving the Al-mighty, almost like a toddler who grows from day to day in his prowess to stand on his own. We can grow in our avodah if we look for purpose in life and pursue it sincerely and willingly.

This is why the parshiyot of Bereishit describe in great detail the lives of the Avot and do not concentrate on explaining the mitzvot (as later parshiyot do). The underlying message is: learn how to act from the Avot as a prerequisite for keeping the rest of the Torah. This concept is expressed in Pirkei Avot: “If there is no derech eretz, there is no Torah.” The Torah is compared to water. Just as water can be accumulated by allowing it to flow into a container, likewise we can hold and retain Torah only by refining our character and perfecting ourselves. Working on one's middot fashions the receptacle of the human soul to contain the timeless wisdom of the Torah.

In this vein, we can begin to appreciate the story of Lot and his separation from Avraham. There is a very deep lesson in Avodat Hashem to learn from their parting of ways. At first glance, Lot appears to be a righteous individual as well as a firm believer in Hashem. When he went down to Egypt with his uncle Avraham, he did not disclose Sarah's true marital status, despite the opportunity to benefit by revealing this information to the Egyptian authorities. And as a sign of his belief, perhaps we can point to his consent to allow his shepherds to graze his sheep in the fields of others. By doing so, he demonstrated his belief in Hashem. Since he was the apparent heir to Avraham, and the ultimate recipient of the Promised Land, he thought that the land was his.

Actually, Avraham never told Lot that he would be his heir. Although childless for many years, Avraham trusted in Hashem's promise (Bereishit 12:2) “and I will make you into a great nation,” that he would one day have a son. Avraham also understood the words לך לך, which have a numerical value of one hundred, as hinting to the birth of a son at the age of one hundred.

What Avraham told his men who accompanied him was that Hashem had commanded him to go to a new land, “to the land that I shall show you.” Lot inferred that if Hashem had sent Avraham to leave Charan and go to a different land, then that land would one day be his. Lot thought that since Avraham was barren, he himself would eventually become the rightful heir and owner. Thus Lot was not stealing (in his own eyes). He was just taking what was already promised and would eventually end up as his own.

As we continue in the parashah, we find more examples of Lot's seeming piety and righteousness. By taking in the Heavenly wayfarers and providing them with lodging in Sodom, he not only risked his life, he also jeopardized the welfare of his two daughters. Even Avraham Avinu did not keep the mitzvah of hachnasat orchim in such trying circumstances. Chazal add that Lot gave his guests matzot, as it was Pesach. Lot kept what he learnt from Avraham Avinu, and evidently removed all of the chametz from his possession as well.

This all goes to show how Lot sacrificed for the sake of mitzvot. Specifically regarding the mitzvot of Pesach, the Arizal says that whoever keeps the laws of Pesach properly will not stumble or cause others to fall and sin. The obvious question is – why did Lot choose to live in the city of Sodom, which was known for its depravity and wickedness? What connection did he have with these evil people?

The truth of the matter is that Lot did feel an affinity with the residents of Sodom. A person naturally gravitates to those whom have similar interests as he. Beneath his religious appearance lay indifference to taking the property of others, similar to the Sodomites and their thieving ways. That was his base motive for allowing his shepherds to graze their sheep wherever they wanted. Even according to his underlying assumption that he would one day inherit his uncle, this did not justify the misappropriation of property before their rightful acquisition. This behavior is similar to the one who procures all of the properties in a game of Monopoly at the beginning of the game, by reasoning that he would win the game anyway due to his opponent's lack of knowledge of the game. This was Lot's mistake.

By thinking about the events in the lives of our great forefathers and their righteous ways, we can begin to appreciate many of the laws of the Torah. We can see the ill effects that violating Torah prohibitions can have on man. Stealing becomes more than some archaic prohibition. We see it for what it really is – a one-way street to spiritual defection, even if one does not personally benefit from taking what belongs to others. By reading these parshiyot of the Avot, we have the preface to begin our journey of understanding the Torah's laws and growing in our love of Hashem.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

- 11 – Rachel Imeinu
- 12 – Rabbi Nachum of Shadik
- 13 – Rabbi Rachamim Bardah Av Beit Din of Tripolli
- 14 – Rabbi Avraham Elimelech The Admor of Karlin
- 15 – Rabbi Leib Ba'al Yessurim
- 15 – The holy Rabbi Chaim Pinto, Ha'katan zya"ta
- 16 – Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach
- 17 – Rabbi Binyamin Ze'ev Cheshin



Walking in their Ways

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

Demise through the Dollar

A man from New York breathed his last as he was sitting in front of his personal computer. An intensive investigation into the cause of his death revealed that he observed the stock market crash. He realized that in one instant, all of his money was gone. His heart could not contain this loss, and he suffered a fatal heart attack.

This is the case of a person who was enslaved to his money. His money was the cause of his death. Although the world calls a wealthy mogul the master of his business, the truth is that he is actually the indentured servant of his money.

Real Wealth

On one occasion when I visited Brazil I met a very wealthy Jew who had lost five hundred million dollars in two months through bad investments in the stock market. He lost all his money there.

When he met me he said:

Honorable Rabbi! Every day I thank Hashem that I met you, because ever since I got to know you, I have drawn closer to Judaism,

and this is what keeps me going despite all my losses.

I was happy to hear about his resolute faith in Hashem and that I had merited being the messenger to bring him back to his Father in Heaven. I tried to help him in his business and I gave him a number of ideas how to succeed. However, the man did not take my advice and suffered loss after loss. After all his losses, he was barely left with a remnant of his past wealth.

Despite all this, he remained steadfast in his faith and said:

Although I lost material possessions, my house, my money, etc., I earned spiritual values. I do not eat non-kosher food, my children are enrolled in Torah institutions, and my wife covers her hair. I gained all this by discovering my Jewish heritage.

This Jew succeeded in dealing with his challenges in an honorable way and did not become depressed as a result of his financial crisis because of his steadfast belief in Hashem which kept his spirits up. He gained his real wealth, which is stored for him in the World to Come.



Words of Our Sages

Gems on the Parashah From the Torah Sages

Feeling the Captive's Pain

"And when Avraham heard that his kinsman was taken captive, he armed his disciples" (Breishit 14:14)

The Pele Yo'aitz states: The greatness of the mitzvah of saving lives is well known; saving lives takes precedence over all the mitzvot in the Torah and of course, even more so, all Jews are obligated to spend all their money and even sell Torah scrolls in order to save a [Jew's] life. Chazal say "He who preserves one soul of Israel is considered as if he had preserved the whole world." This is because our first father Avraham was a single individual and tens of thousands of Jews came from him. And from Adam came the whole world. Therefore, it is mandatory to hurry and try with all one's might to benefit his fellow, and Hashem will do what is good in His Eyes. He grants a great reward for one who makes an effort [to benefit others] as if he succeeded."

The tzaddik Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, zt"l, would give his life to redeem captives. Once Rabbi Menachem Nachum was arrested at night in the city of Zhitomir and was placed in prison. In light of this, Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, zt"l requested to remain with him.

One day there appeared before them a woman whose head was covered with a silk kerchief, and she asked Rabbi Menachem Nachum in wonder:

"Such Torah, and such a reward?"

Rabbi Menachem Nachum answered calmly: "Yes! Such Torah, and such a reward."

The woman vanished and then Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf gathered courage and asked Rabbi Menachem Nachum:

"Who was this woman and what did she say?"

Rabbi Menachem Nachum answered:

"This righteous woman was Sara Imeinu a"h, and she asked me: Do you not engage constantly in the mitzvah of redeeming captives? If so, how is it possible that you are rewarded by being under arrest?"

I answered her: In fact, it is fitting for me to be under arrest, so that I should know and experience first-hand the great pain of captives. In this way I shall make even greater efforts to redeem captives that are languishing in prison."

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

"Why do you say, O Jacob"

(Yeshayahu 40:27)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah discusses Avraham Avinu's battle against the four kings, as it says, "Who inspired [the one] from the east, at whose [every] footstep righteousness attended? [Who] delivered nations to him, and subdued kings [before him]" etc., and this battle is described in the parashah.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

His Glib Tongue Will Remain Silent

When the evil nature of the gossip will become known, everyone will despise him for it and they will guard themselves from him so that he should not mock them. Also in the future, even if he will merit arising for Resurrection, he will be literally mute and be unable to open his mouth. Chazal say that in the future Hashem will cut the tongues of gossip mongers, as it says, "May Hashem excise all lips of smooth talk, the tongue which speaks boastfully."

Who can imagine the enormous pain of that person and his eternal humiliation, since then everyone will know his nature that he was an evil person, and with his glib tongue he caused hatred between man and his fellow. This is as the pasuk states (Kohelet), "In the end, everything is heard [revealed]."



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

Our wise Sages wrote that in the future each person will be asked if he was a "tzaddik," meaning: did he fulfill each day the requirements of Kedushah which are alluded to in the numerical value of the letters קידצ (tzaddik).

צ - 90 times answering Amen

ד - 4 times Kedushah

י - 10 times Kaddish

ק - 100 blessings

This is because a person cannot be considered a tzaddik unless he was careful with all this.

The Zohar states that prayer is considered tzedaka; צ - 90 times answering Amen, ד - 4 times Kedushah, ק - 100 blessings, and ה - 5 chumashim of the Torah (5 Books of Moses). Regarding this it states (Mishlei 14:34) "Charity will uplift" etc. In this merit Hashem has mercy upon His creations. Furthermore, the Tikunei Zohar mentions the virtue of those who answer 90 times Amen each day - that they give a gift to Hashem in the best way, which is tzedaka.

In a similar style, it is brought in the sefer Maavar Yabok that every day one must do הקדצ - tzedaka; צ - 90 times answering Amen, ד - 4 times Kedushah, ק - 100 blessings, and ה - 5 chumashim of the Torah (5 Books of Moses), and there are those who say 5 times Kaddish.

This implies, as explained in the sefer Beer Lchai Roe, a commentary on the Tikunei Zohar: Answering Amen 90 times and other things of kedushah are called by the Zohar "Tzedaka," since a person should perform these things not in order to gain reward, but like giving charity to the poor, whereas his desire is just to give pleasure to his Creator, and for this he is judged favorably that Hashem will accept his supplication with His Righteous Right Hand."

How are these 90 Amens calculated?

Regarding this Rabbi Menachem Azaria of Pano, zt"l writes an important notation, that the 90 Amens a person is obligated to answer each day includes only Amen that one answers after a blessing, and not Amen that one answers to Kaddish.

This idea is explained in greater detail in the commentary of Rabbi Moshe Zakuta on the Zohar (Parshat Lech Lecha), where he specifies that the blessings and the Kedushot and Kaddishim are anyways said and heard by the congregants. However, a person should try to answer the 90 Amens by listening to others recite blessings, as we do, which is the ancient custom in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore the pasuk specifically states (Yeshayahu 26:2), "גוי צדיק שומר אמונים" - the righteous nation, keeper of the faith" and does not state "שומר קדושות" - keeper of the

Kedushot," because he should intentionally seek to answer Amen in order to bring the merit of 90 Amens to the public each day.

There is a wonderful custom adopted by many Jewish communities, as Rabbi Zalmen, zt"l, writes (Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 10:9), that after one recites the Morning Blessings and his fellows answer Amen, another fellow then recites the Morning Blessings out loud and the congregants answer Amen, and so on, in order to enable everyone to answer 90 Amens each day.

The Segulah of 90 Amens

Rabbi Yitzchak Abuchatzera, zt"l, writes in his sefer Elef Hamagen: A wonderful segulah for one who desires that his prayers should be pleasant to Hashem as the Ketoret should answer 90 Amens each day. The source of this he found through a remez in the pasuk (Bamidbar 7:14) "כף אחת עשרה זהב מלאה קטורת" - One gold ladle of ten [shekels] filled with incense." The words "מלאה זהב" - gold...filled" have the numerical value of 90, referring to the צ (90), implying צדיק which signifies 90 Amens. From this we learn that when a person answers 90 Amens each day, his prayers are considered as Ketoret by Hashem.

The Chida mentions another segulah by answering 90 Amens each day in his sefer Midbar Kedaimot that anyone who answers 90 Amens each day, the sorcerers cannot harm him. "This is what one woman heard from a sorceress who was sent by her fellows to kidnap her baby while she was sleeping; the sorceress argued that she is unable to do so because the mother answered 90 Amens that day. The woman woke up and heard this."

Long and Blessed Life

Among the segulot and the virtues of those who are careful to answer 90 Amens each day, there is also a wonderful segulah for a long and blessed life. This segulah is brought by the sefer "Sefer Kadmon":

Therefore a person should try to pray in a Beit Haknesset especially with a congregation and he will be assured that he will also answer 90 Amens, and thus will fulfill "צדיק באמונתו יחיה" - But the righteous person shall live through his faith." This is literally so (since the words translated literally mean that a Tzaddik lives because of his Amens), thus in the merit of answering 90 Amens (implied by the word צדיק - tzaddik) he will live a good long life in this world and in the World to Come. He will sit Above together with the tzaddikim, who even in their deaths are considered living, and he will live eternally.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik,
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit'a



Lack of Faith is the Root of all Evil

"And there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Avraham's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock... So Avraham said to Lot: 'Please let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are kinsmen'" (Bereishit 13:7-8)

Avraham could have gotten angry at Lot and tell him to leave him. But, instead, he chose to appease him and said, "Please separate from me," and requests, "If you go left then I will go right, and if you go right then I will go left." In other words, Avraham turned to Lot and said - it is preferable that we separate from each other, and if you do not want to relocate to a different place, then remain here and I will leave...

This is the way Avraham Avinu a"h conducted himself; with humility, and with soft words. In fact, Lot listened to him and did not argue. But we do not find that he was pained by the separation from Avraham. He did not plead for a second chance to rejoin Avraham.

Let us understand what was the root of the argument that arose between the herdsmen of Avraham and the herdsmen of Lot? The main conflict was their argument regarding stealing. The herdsmen of Lot would take their herds to pasture in other people's fields, and Avraham's herdsmen would admonish them about stealing. They argued that the entire land was granted to Avraham, but because Avraham had no heir, eventually Lot, his next of kin, would ultimately inherit the Land. Therefore, it was not considered stealing.

Lot lacked faith in Hashem, since one who believes that Hashem will provide for him, does not steal. We see regarding Avraham Avinu, despite receiving a promise from Hashem that He would give the Land to his offspring, he did not allow himself to legalize robbery, but instead waited until Hashem would actually give him the Land. And Lot - who was not even Avraham's offspring, but only his nephew, succumbed to his Yetzer and found an allowance to rob, claiming that he was a descendent of Avraham. His lust for the inheritance blinded him. All this stemmed from his lack of faith.

Another significant difference can be seen between Lot and Avraham. Lot's actions stemmed from personal interests. Also his mitzvot were performed by rote, and not because his love of Hashem. He stuck to his uncle because of personal interests. Therefore, when he was presented with an opportunity to go out and become wealthy ("He saw the plain of the Jordan that it was well watered everywhere"), he grabbed the opportunity and parted from Avraham.

When I was a young boy learning in a yeshiva in England, there was a certain student there who was very mischievous. The Rosh Yeshiva warned all the boys that if they were caught acting inappropriately, he would expel them from the yeshiva. The Rosh Yeshiva notified this mischievous boy as well. The boy understood that they wanted to expel him from yeshiva. He took the warning literally and left the yeshiva. This indicates that this is really what he desired. He was waiting for an opportunity to leave the yeshiva.



Rabbi Chaim Pinto Ha-Katan

The holy Maran Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zya"á

This week there will be the hilula of one of the spiritual giants, a scion of the illustrious Pinto dynasty, who lived in Morocco, the tzaddik and miracle-worker, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zya"á. The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, zya"á merited greatness and brought much merit to the public in spiritual and material matters as well. He turned the hearts of the Jews back to their Father in Heaven during his life time and continues to do so even after his passing to the Yeshiva Above.

In the week that we read about Avrahav Avinu, the pillar of charity, we will take a peek at the exalted figure of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zya"á, and his outstanding acts of charity, which was only a part of his lofty deeds and outstanding righteousness with which he illuminated the world.

Rabbi Chaim, zya"á was undoubtedly one "Who bestows beneficent kindnesses upon His people Israel." He invested great efforts to care for the livelihood and sustaining the poor and needy people of his city. His daily schedule began after the Shacharit prayers, when he would visit the grave of his grandfather the tzaddik and mekubal Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, in the old cemetery. He would always mention his name while blessing people, saying, "The merit of the honorable, holy forefather, my grandfather, should protect you."

Afterward, he would go to the new cemetery and prostrate himself over the grave of his father, the holy tzaddik Rabbi Yehuda (Hadan). Then, he would set out in the direction of the shops, in order to purchase the necessary provisions for the poor.

He would instruct his attendant to visit a needy widow or underprivileged family, in order to deliver the food. For some, he would instruct his attendant to deliver meat and pastries, and to others, fruits and vegetables. In this way the attendant shared in the mitzvah of distributing food among the needy, preventing the poor people of the city from starving.

R' Itzchak Abisoror relates that Rabbi Chaim Hakatan called him several times to accompany him on his rounds of collecting money from the people of the city and distributing the charity among the poor. Not everyone merited accompanying Rabbi Chaim when he collected money, since it was a special privilege. However, R' Itzchak was chosen for the mission.

Every Friday, Rabbi Chaim would go and gather food from people so that he could distribute it among the poor in honor of Shabbat Kodesh. He would not collect money on Fridays, since he knew that time was limited, and the poor would not have sufficient time to buy provisions for Shabbat. Conversely, on other days, he would collect money and distribute it to the poor.

When Rabbi Chaim would visit the houses of the people to ask them to contribute some of their food, he would reveal to them in a supernatural manner how much food they required for that day, and how much they would need to eat that week. Consequently, he would be able to inform them how much they could spare for tzedakah.

There were those who actively searched for Rabbi Chaim, passing in front of him intentionally, in order that he should request of them to donate a specific sum of money for

tzedakah. They believed that if they would fulfill the request of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, they would meet success and thereafter experience good fortune in all their endeavors.

It was a known fact among the Moroccan Jews that if Rabbi Chaim would bless them for their donation, everything would go well for them that day. Furthermore, they would see wondrous miracles in the coming week.

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan used to bundle the money he collected for charitable purposes in a handkerchief that was specifically designated for this mitzvah. After the stars came out, even before Rabbi Chaim began to learn Torah, he would ritually wash the kerchief that held the money.

When questioned about this custom, the tzaddik explained, "I wash the kerchief from the kelippot and contamination of this world. The greatest filth in this world is money. Therefore, after distributing the funds for tzedakah, I wash the kerchief."

It is amazing to see how much tzaddikim loathe money. Although tzaddikim guard their possessions, they do not become attached to them, but use them as means to sustain themselves and fulfill mitzvot. Otherwise, they are detached from it. In this way they retire at night free from desires for material possessions.

May the merits of the tzaddik serve to protect us and the all Jewish people, may we all be remembered for salvation and mercy, Amen.