

Shemot

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682

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

The Importance of Prayer

“During those many days, it happened that the king of Egypt died, and the Children of Israel groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to G-d. G-d heard their moaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov” (Shemot 2:23-24)

Am Yisrael cried out to Hashem because of the torturous labor that the Egyptians forced them to do. The Torah explains that Hashem heard their groaning, which signifies prayer. Furthermore, the Brit Bein Habetarim is mentioned; Hashem gave His promise to our Fathers to redeem the Jews from Egypt.

The bondage of the Jews in Egypt was a decree from Hashem, and Hashem promised the Fathers that after 400 years of slavery, Am Yisrael would be redeemed with an upraised hand, an outstretched arm, and with great wealth.

Thus, we may wonder, would Bnei Yisrael not have been redeemed without their prayers? After all, the Exodus from Egypt was included in the covenant that Hashem established with the Fathers, that following their enslavement, Hashem would redeem them. It seems that the redemption would have occurred in any case, without Bnei Yisrael investing effort, such as praying. So why does the Torah emphasize that Hashem heard the outcry and prayers of Am Yisrael – and only then decided to redeem them? From the words of the pasuk it seems that only in the merit of the prayers they merited Redemption. This requires explanation.

The main purpose of the redemption was to forge a connection between Am Yisrael and Hashem. Were it not for this connection, there would be no purpose for the redemption. As we know, prayer serves to link a person to his Creator. This is why when Am Yisrael cried out to Hashem, they merited the salvation because of their connection and belonging to Hashem. Their prayer was the catalyst for their salvation; otherwise they would not have been worthy to receive the Torah. Of course, even without their prayers they would have been redeemed by virtue of Hashem's covenant with the Fathers. But what made the Redemption meaningful were the prayers of Bnei Yisrael to Hashem; the point of it was to create a relationship between the Jewish people and Hashem. This is why the Torah specifies that Am Yisrael called out to Hashem in prayer prior to their Redemption.

The gemara relates (Berachot 10a) the story of Chizkiyahu Hamelech, that the prophet Yeshayahu came to him and informed him that he was about to die, and not only was his life in this world being taken from him, but he also was going to forfeit his portion in the World to Come, because he never got married and thereby transgressed a mitzvah of the Torah. When Chizkiyahu heard this, he started to cry and asked Yeshayahu to

allow his daughter to marry him. Yeshayahu answered him that it was too late, since the decree was already decided upon by Hashem.

King Chizkiyahu did not accept his answer and therefore told the prophet Yeshayahu to just finish relating his prophesy and leave. King Chizkiyahu got on his bed, and since death creeps up on a person through his legs, and numbness began to set in, Chizkiyahu cried out bitterly to Hashem to give him a second chance and extend his life so that he could get married. He was answered from Heaven and was granted another fifteen years to live in order to correct his ways and get married, because Chizkiyahu had issued a sincere cry from the very depths of his heart, and in fact, even if a sharp sword is placed on the neck of a person, he should not despair from Hashem's Mercy.

This is truly difficult to understand. The prophet Yeshayahu knew that as long as “the candle is lit, one can correct his ways,” and therefore King Chizkiyahu still had an opportunity to pray to Hashem to annul the fatal decree. As we mentioned, even in the most difficult moments, one must not despair of Hashem's Mercy. So why did the prophet claim that it was too late and he could not change the decree? Moreover, we would expect the prophet Yeshayahu to beseech Hashem in prayer on behalf of King Chizkiyahu in face of his overwhelming distress and pain, and not discourage him before trying.

We can explain this in the following way. One cannot compare the prayers of a person for himself to the prayers of others for him. Yeshayahu knew that in those critical moments, when the decree was issued against the king, only the power of King Chizkiyahu's prayers for himself could change the situation, since his prayers certainly would emanate from the depths of his heart in all sincerity. Because King Chizkiyahu's prayers would be much more powerful than the prayers of the prophet Yeshayahu; for prayers on behalf of oneself are most powerful, therefore, Yeshayahu did not supplicate in prayer for the king. He wanted Chizkiyahu to cry to Hashem in pain, and consequently this would annul the evil decree against him, and he would not rely on the prophet's prayers on his behalf.

I remember my father, ztk"l; he was always actively praying to arouse the mercy of Heaven upon Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael as well as for the Final Redemption. I am sure that if there was a person who was not worthy for his prayers to be accepted in his own right, the merits of the pure and sincere prayers of my father certainly stood in good stead for him and subsequently he merited salvation from Heaven. When a person goes to a tzaddik, he merits salvation, also in the merit of the tzaddik's prayers for him, and also because he humbled himself and came to receive help from the tzaddik.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

23 - Rabbi Camus Buchris

24 - Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi The
Ba'al HaTanya

25 - Rabbi Yissachar Meir Rosh Yeshiva
of "The Negev"

26 - Rabbi Shalom Yitzchak Mizrachi

27 - Rabbi Yitzchak of Krakow

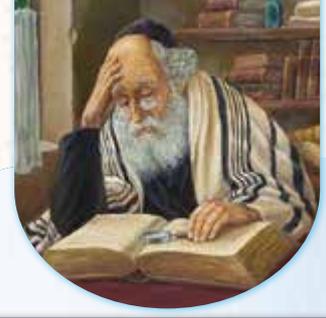
28 - Rabbi Channanel Nifi Author of
"Liviat Chen"

29 - Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri



Walking in their Ways

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



Words of Our Sages

A Gem of a Lesson

I once arrived at Los Angeles a day after the city suffered a devastating earthquake. A man told me that there was a woman who had been badly hurt in the earthquake. She was lying in the hospital. Would I care to do the mitzvah of bikur cholim and visit her?

I agreed to his request. When I entered her room, I found that she had already opened her eyes. I asked if she recalled what she was doing precisely when the earthquake began.

“The night before, I had received a shipment of diamonds from Belgium. Immediately before the earthquake, I was busy counting and sorting the diamonds by size. Suddenly, I found myself in the hospital.”

“Didn’t you feel the earth shaking under you?”

“I felt nothing at all,” she responded. “How could I realize something was amiss? I was completely involved in the diamonds at the time.”

Upon hearing her narrative, I was struck by its lesson. When we pray, we should feel as though we are counting diamonds. We must be completely immersed in our prayer, thinking only of the words we say, and consider each one a gem. Our prayers have the power to rise heavenward and stand in our defense.

We should pray slowly and clearly, with deliberation, like one who is counting coins or jewels. In this manner, our prayers will be considered precious in Hashem’s eyes.

“And they caused the boys to live” (Shemot 1:15)

There are different levels in doing chessed with others.

There are those who do chessed for the sole purpose of receiving benefits in exchange for their deed. Then there are those who do chessed because they are embarrassed to refuse the person turning to them.

Greater than them is one who does chessed because he is overcome by his compassion by the distress of his fellow.

It is true that in any case the result is the same – assisting one’s fellow. However, there is chessed done at an even higher level, which is exalted and preferable. This is when chessed is performed not from personal motivations, like these, or others, but it is performed only because Hashem commanded him to do so. This was the virtue of the midwives, Shifrah and Puah.

The Torah attests to this as is stated, “But the midwives feared G-d” – It was not their personal considerations of pity, and the like, that motivated them to save the children, but only their fear of Heaven and commitment to fulfilling Hashem’s commands.

There was a youth of fourteen who suffered from mental problems, and while undergoing depression, he came to the home of Rabbeinu Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach in order to receive his guidance and blessings...

Once he came to the home of the leader of the generation, and at that time Rabbi Shach was very weak. Nevertheless, he greeted him warmly and sat down to speak with him for a long time to encourage him.

When he left, one of the disciples expressed his wonder: To what extent is the Rosh Yeshiva obligated to help this boy? Especially the Rosh Yeshiva who was extremely busy preparing lectures and looking after his people; how do you behave with such patience and dedication with a boy of fourteen?

Rabbi Elazar Menachem Shach replied: You know that this boy has a difficult problem. He was here two weeks ago and also a month ago. He will come again in two weeks and then in a month. I can encourage him and calm him down, but I see no way to heal him. Only through a miracle will he be cured.

How can we bring about a miracle? When Hashem sees a Jew committing himself to others in a supernatural way, He also helps in a supernatural way...

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

“The words of Yirmeyahu son of Hilkiyah”

(Yirmeyahu 1)

The Ashkenazim read the haftarah

“[Days] are coming when Yaakov will take root”

(Yeshayahu 27)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah relates how Yirmeyahu at first argued that he was not suitable to be Hashem’s messenger, since he did not know how to speak to the people because he was just a youth. This is similar to what Moshe Rabbeinu claimed in the parashah. He refused Hashem’s mission for him arguing that he was not a man of words.



Guard Your Tongue

Researching the validity of the report

When one does not derive any benefit from hearing the report, but by listening he may derive benefit for his fellow, then he is permitted to listen.

For example, if he wants to hear the report in order to research its validity and admonish the person about it, then maybe this may be a reason to listen, so that he can influence the transgressor to repent, or the thief to return the stolen goods. (“Chafetz Chaim”)



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

The gaon Rabbi Betzalel Stern, zt"l, author of Shu"t "B'Tzail Hachachma" tells over about his father Rabbi Avraham Stern, zt"l, author of "Melitzei Aish" the following tale concerning the reward for answering "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah" meticulously, and G-d forbid, the retribution for failing to do so.

It was on Shabbat Kodesh, and the author of "Melitzei Aish" was delivering a lecture to the congregants in the city of Neuhausel, emphasizing the importance of answering "Amen," and "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah," and he mentioned the words of Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, zy"a, that the acronym of the word "שיבה" (old age) spell **שתיקה יפה בשעת התפילה** – silence is commendable during prayers." This signifies that one who is careful in this matter and answers "Amen" and "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah" merits good old age. The Rabbi, Rabbi Avraham Stern, zt"l, added: "From the positive you deduce the negative" – and I prefer not to mention the negative.

The next morning there was a great commotion in the Beit Haknesset because one of the congregants came and related what had happened to him that night:

At night he dreamed that he was standing before the Heavenly Court Above, and he was judged to die. Then he began to plead before the Court that he had not yet reached old age, so why should he be judged so harshly. The Heavenly Court Above answered him: Since you engaged in casual conversation in the middle of the prayer Services and failed to answer "Amen" and "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah," you were judged in this way.

The man tried his luck again and said to the Court that he had not known the enormous severity of the matter. Then one of the judges raged at him: How dare you say such a thing? Just this Shabbat the Rabbi of your congregation delivered a lecture on this topic and quoted the words of Rabbi Moshe Cordevero that those who sit silently in the Beit Haknesset and answer "Amen" and "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah" properly merit old age. The Rabbi even added that "from the positive one deduces the negative." So you see for yourself! How can you argue that you did not know the severity of the matter when you yourself were present at that lecture?!

"I gave my promise to the Heavenly Court," the man continued, "that from now on I would publicize this matter and inform all the congregants what had happened so that they should take greater precautions to answer "Amen" and "Amen, y'hei Shmei Rabbah." In this way I merited being acquitted before the Court.

Rabbi Betzalel's Stern's family members added that they personally knew this man who had the dream, and he merited immigrating to Eretz Yisrael and lived to an old age.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoan Hatzaddik,
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, silita



The Torah is comprised of the Holy Names of G-d

"He replied: Who appointed you as a dignitary, a ruler, and a judge over us? Do you propose to murder me, as you murdered the Egyptian?" (Shemot 2:14)

This is what Datan and Aviram said to Moshe Rabbeinu when he admonished them for striking one another, and they asked him if he was proposing to kill them like he killed the Egyptian.

Rashi comments: "Do you plan to slay me: lit., do you say to slay me. From here we learn that he slew him with the ineffable Name." We may wonder, if Datan and Aviram saw Moshe kill the Egyptians with the ineffable Name, how did they dare argue with Moshe Rabbeinu with such audacity? After all, they witnessed his powers, killing the Egyptians through the breath of his mouth!

Actually, the ineffable Name that Moshe used to kill the Egyptian is not the only ineffable Name of Hashem, but each and every word of the Torah is a form of Hashem's Name (Introduction of the Ramban on the Torah). From this we learn about the enormous obligation to contemplate the Torah and its letters, because its profundity is derived from the fact that each word in the Torah is a Name of Hashem. For example, when one studies the Mishnah "Two persons hold a garment," then certainly it is discussing the garment that two people are holding, but in reality it is literally the Names of Hashem.

Once a Jew asked me if I know how to pronounce the ineffable Name, and I told him, yes. The person was impressed and refused to believe it. I said to him: Every blessing that a person recites with the words "Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the universe" is literally the ineffable Name. It is important to know that practical Kabbalah is not necessarily through combination of Names and deep esoteric thoughts regarding the secrets of the Torah, but every single mitzvah, and every word of Torah that a person struggles to comprehend, and likewise, every prayer that a person concentrates on according to his level and comprehension, and his expression of the unity of G-d when reciting "Hear, O Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem, the One and Only" is truly practical Kabbalah and in essence the Names of Hashem.

There was an awesome story that happened in France with my doctor. Apart from being one of the senior doctors in France, he is also a sincere Baal Teshuvah who sets fixed times each day with great self-sacrifice to study Torah, and does not take any calls at that time under any circumstance. Once it happened that his colleague, who was also a Jew, was diagnosed with malignant cancer. The cancer was discovered at an advanced stage, so that it was clear that his days were numbered. My doctor came to visit his colleague and advised him that although it was clearly predicted that his cancer would soon cause him to die, perhaps Hashem sent him the illness in order that he should strengthen his commitment to Torah and thereby merit life. His sick colleague accepted his advice and promptly implemented it. He set fixed times to study Torah and began observing mitzvot. Lo and behold, after a few months, he was completely cured. It was an obvious miracle and all the doctors agreed that there was never a man who survived such a case of cancer.

This miracle was by virtue of the Torah. Actually the Torah is practical Kabbalah and is capable of working wonders and miracles like this, as it is stated "the will of those who fear Him He will do," namely, the will of Torah scholars, since even without using practical Kabbalah, Hashem fulfills their will.

Why then are we not impressed and inspired by the Names of Hashem when we study Torah and perform mitzvot? It seems, as we explained before, that when a person chooses to occupy himself with the vanities of this world and cannot abstain from them, his ears and his senses become dulled. This is what happened to Datan and Aviram. Although they witnessed the miracle of Moshe killing the Egyptian with the ineffable Name of Hashem, they were not impressed by it, because they were steeped in sin and engaged in slander. Those who are steeped in the vanities of this world, and even more so, engage in slander, are unable to appreciate and believe in Hashem and Moshe, His servant.



Tanna D'vei Eliyahu

Praiseworthy are the people of Israel, wherever they may dwell. For they have been exiled to all four corners of the world; to the north and south, to the south and north; to the east and west, and to the west and east. [Despite this] they are in the center (they remain in existence and are not destroyed), as it is stated (Amos 9:9) "For behold, I decree that I will shake out the House of Israel among the nations, as [grain] is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble falls to the ground". If in the verse it would be stated "a pebble shall fall to the ground", then my heart is broken within me, and all my bones tremble, for then I would say the pebble will fall to the ground and be pulverized; so is the course of nature. Now that it is stated "and not a pebble falls to the ground", [I say] just as this pebble [in the sieve] is moved back and forth, to here and to there; it remains in the center. So too, Israel, I am their atonement, in all of their dwelling places to where they were exiled to the four corners of heaven; to the north and south, to the south and north; to the east and west, and to the west and east; [despite this] they are in the center.

So it is stated by your servant the prophet (Malachi 3:6), "For I, Hashem, have not changed ("shaniti") in the original Hebrew) and you the sons of Jacob, you have not perished"; the Holy One Blessed Be He says, "I have never smitten a nation and then smitten them again (the word "shaniti" can also mean "repeat"), thus it is stated "For I, Hashem, have not changed ("shaniti") in the original Hebrew)".



Men of Faith

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

Small Creatures Teach Great Respect

Based on the halachic ruling of Rabbi Khalifa ibn Malka, some of the Moroccan Jews were accustomed to eat grasshoppers. Rabbi Khalifa only allowed the consumption of grasshoppers bearing specific signs that according to tradition rendered them pure.

On the other hand, Maran Rabbeinu Hakadosh, Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, the holy Ohr Hachaim, zy" a, was stringent in this matter and prohibited eating grasshoppers. He wrote in his commentary on the Torah (parashat Shemini 11:21) "Therefore, every G-d-fearing Jew should tremble with fear and not help themselves to this insect. He should admonish anyone partaking of it. From the

day that my words were publicized in the West, many abstained from eating it, and Hashem did not smite them with this plague. In fact, it has not struck for over twelve years, because Torah and good deeds serve as a shield in the face of calamity."

It is noteworthy to mention that despite the difference in opinions that existed between the tzaddik Rabbi Khalifa ibn Malka and Maran the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh concerning the consumption of grasshoppers, they held each other in great respect. Rabbi Khalifa himself would constantly remind the public of the importance of according honor to Torah scholars. He would say, "Despite the fact that one differs in opinion, it is incumbent for

What does "and you the sons of Jacob, you have not perished" refer to?

You find seventy-two types of afflictions in the Torah; He who sits on His Throne, the righteous Judge, may His great Name be blessed forever and all eternity; He says if I will bring upon Israel all of these seventy-two afflictions they shall be repulsive among the nations and the nations will say of them "they are ugly". Therefore any of the four shades of affliction that are stated in the Torah; if you shall see one of Israel that has one of the aforementioned afflictions, it atones for Israel in all of their dwelling places like the scapegoat that was sent away; for one of Israel is equal to all of the nations of the world.

Food and Drink, Gladness and Joy of the Tzaddikim in the Days of Mashiach and the World to Come

How shall it be?

[There shall be] beds arranged for the tzaddikim within the fire; they shall eat and drink and rejoice with great joy, as it is stated (Yeshaye 65:13) "Therefore, thus said my Lord, Hashem/Elokim: Behold, My servants will eat and you will starve; behold, My servants will drink and you will thirst; behold, My servants will rejoice and you will be ashamed; behold, My servants will exult from good heartedness, etc."

For all of the heaven and earth, sun and moon, stars and constellations and all of creation to see – these are the deeds of the tzaddikim. For all of the heaven and earth, sun and moon, stars and constellations and all of creation to see – these are the deeds of the wicked. These collect the rewards of their actions and these collect the rewards of their actions, as it is stated "The light of the moon will be like the light of the sun, etc." (Yeshaye 30:26). Regarding this time it is stated "Sinners were afraid in Zion; trembling seized

hypocrites" (Yeshaye 33:14). For each and every one [of the wicked] they will lead and sit them and say to them: Fools of the world! Up to this time you did not recognize who lives in the world, as it is stated "One who walks with righteousness and speaks with truthfulness etc." (ibid. 33:15) You tzadikim of the world who did My will as in My Torah always every day, what does it say concerning them? "But a sun of righteousness will shine for you who fear My Name" (Malachi 3:20).

Some of the Food and Drink of the Tzaddikim in this World

How is it?

He who reads (Scripture) and studies (Mishnah) for the sake of Heaven and partakes of his own and lives from the fruit of his labors; regarding him it is stated: "When you eat the fruit of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is well with you" (Psalms 128:2). "Praiseworthy" – in this world, and "well with you" – in the world to come.

It is also stated: "How beautiful are you, befitting the pleasures of spiritual love" (Shir HaShirim 7:7). Concerning what was this stated? When one lives from his own – I bring the heaven and earth as witnesses; that every talmid chacham who reads (Scripture) and studies (Mishnah) for the sake of Heaven and partakes of his own and lives from the fruit of his labors, regarding him it is stated: "But I have not seen a righteous man forsaken, nor his children begging for bread" (Psalms 37:25). And not only that, but also the members of his household shall fear him, and the Holy One Blessed Be He loves him with a complete love. It is also stated, "Then all the peoples of the world will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed over you, and they will revere you" (Devarim 28:10), "When you pass through water, I am with you; through rivers, they will not wash you away" (Yeshaye 43:2).

each person to honor the other, since every person has special status in the merit of his Torah."

For a long time, Rabbi Khalifa and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Pinto were buried in the cemetery of Agadir. Many years ago, the government cleared out the cemetery and moved the grave of Rabbi Khalifa ibn Malka to a different location.

On the day that the government officials moved the remains of the tzaddik, the Jews of Agadir declared a day of prayer and an abstention from speech for a specified period of time. Around the new gravestone, they built a magnificent building made of marble, and engraved the following words:

"Rabbi Khalifa the son of Malka, Hachasidi"