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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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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 L'David

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

Fully devoted

“This is the law: if a man dies in a tent, anyone entering the tent and anything in the tent shall be unclean for seven days”

(Bamidbar 19:14)

Chazal (Berachot 63:2) say that the word “tent” refers to the tent of Torah, as it says, “Yaakov was a wholesome man who dwelt in tents” (Bereishit 25:27). This indicates that all his life, one should sacrifice himself for the sake of Torah. The letters of the word תם (wholesome) can be switched around to spell תמ (dead). Yaakov Avinu merited being the pillar of Torah that upholds the world through his self-sacrifice for Torah.

In many areas of life, halfway is better than nothing. However, regarding Torah study and mitzvah observance, there is no halfway. Torah must be observed to the letter of the law, fully, down to the last detail. If there is a deficiency in one's Avodat Hashem, this flaw is liable to cause a person to spiral downward, until he loses all that he has achieved. This is why it is so critical to continuously exert oneself in his Torah studies and punctiliously observe the mitzvot to the point of “killing himself” in the tent of Torah.

There is no such thing as partial death. Either someone is alive or they are dead. As long as a person is breathing, he is obligated to learn Torah. The Rambam rules that even a very ill man is not exempt from Torah study (Talmud Torah 1:8). As long as a person lives, the yetzer hara beats within him and is liable to trip him up. Only after one leaves this world is he free of the shackles of his yetzer hara. Therefore, even a very sick person must study Torah.

I remember once being very ill with high fever. Nevertheless, I learned Torah with fiery enthusiasm. With Divine help, I merited revealing a new Torah insight, which enabled me to resolve a difficulty. Even a sick man is capable of learning Torah. If he will but push himself, he'll see blessing in his endeavor.

The only way to combat the yetzer hara is through Torah study. Without the element of self-sacrifice for Torah, one is similar to a life-

less body. Moreover, just like a dead person no longer sins as his yetzer hara is gone, so, too, one who “kills himself” in the tent of Torah is saved from sin, since the Torah protects him from his yetzer hara.

Rabbi Akiva is a prime example of someone who succeeded in Torah study through his determination. He was already forty years old before he delved into the waters of Torah. Without concern for his honor, he went to learn with little children. All that mattered to him was that he ascend in Torah wisdom.

What caused Rabbi Akiva to make such a drastic change in his lifestyle? It was an observation he made: He watched as water constantly dripped on a stone. “Just as water can wear down a stone, so can the waters of Torah make an impression on my heart of stone, enabling divrei Torah to enter (Avot D'Rabbi Natan 6:2).

This was certainly not the first time that Rabbi Akiva noticed this phenomenon of water boring a hole in stone. Why was it only at this point in his life, when he was already forty years old, that he took this sacred message to heart?

It was after he saw the mesirut nefesh of Rachel, who was prepared to leave her father, Kalba Savua's wealthy estate in order to marry him, that he realized there was something very precious here. If Torah was so dear to her, it must have tremendous value. Rachel saw Rabbi Akiva's phenomenal potential to grow into a Torah giant. For that, she abandoned all the riches and prestige the world had to offer her.

When Rabbi Akiva saw how much she sacrificed for his Torah advancement, he suddenly saw the world in a different light. Even the common sight of water boring holes in stones took on deeper significance. It drove home the message that it's never too late to become a Torah scholar. Eventually, Rabbi Akiva became one of the greatest men in our history.

As stated above, one should not suffice with mediocrity in his Torah observance. He should give it his all, doing mitzvot as best as he can. Rabbi Akiva left his house for twenty-four years in order to acquire true Torah knowledge. He returned a Torah Sage.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

7 - Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter

8 - Rabbi Chaim Mashash

9 - Rabbi Yekutiel Yehudah Halberstam,
the Klausenberger Rebbe

10 - Rabbi David Chasin

11 - Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch MiZiditchov,
author of "Tzvi Latzaddik"

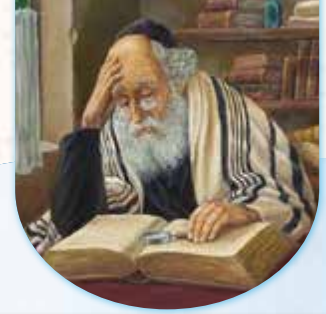
12 - Rabbeinu Yaakov Ba'al HaTurim

13 - Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, H"yd



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 Shot of Security

The following tale took place in Miami, when I stayed at the home of Mr. Ben-Chamou, the son of R' Amram Ben-Chamou, a"h.

A man and his wife came to see me. The wife began by reminding me that the previous year, I had blessed them that they merit having a son. Baruch Hashem, they had been blessed with a beautiful baby boy. Afterward, they had another child. They had now come in order to thank me for my blessing. As a token of their appreciation, they gave me a bottle of whiskey.

This bottle reminded me that I had intended to purchase whiskey in honor of Shabbat. Now I was spared the extra effort involved. I thanked the couple for their generous gift. For some unknown reason, I added, "You are shortly returning to your home in Paris. Do me a favor; take the bottle with you. When I arrive in Paris, you will give it to me."

The couple looked at each other baffled, but did as I instructed. In their hearts, they figured that they would be messengers of a mitzvah on behalf of Rabbi David, as they were transporting an item in honor of Shabbat. As they boarded the plane, the woman told her husband, "In the merit

of the mitzvah, we should have a safe, uneventful journey."

After two hours, there was plane trouble. The plane lost altitude and nearly crashed. Many passengers were injured. Some even lost consciousness as a result of the lack of oxygen. Fear and panic gripped everyone.

The couple with the bottle of whiskey, though, remained calm throughout, remembering that "messengers for a mitzvah are saved from harm."

After a few moments of turbulence, the pilot regained control of the plane and stabilized it. Once again, it gained altitude, soaring into the blue beyond. With the help of Hashem, the couple reached their destination in peace.

The next day, when I was at the airport en route to Paris, I instructed my escort to purchase a bottle of whiskey in honor of Shabbat. "Why did I tell the couple to take back the bottle?" I wondered. "I won't be seeing them until after Shabbat."

Upon arriving at Paris, I heard about the miracles which they had experienced. I immediately understood that it was the merit of the mitzvah that stood in their defense and protected them from all harm. Heaven ordained that I should leave the bottle with them, as protection.

Dancing instead of divorcing

"The entire house of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days" (Bamidbar 20:29)

In contrast to Moshe's death where we read, "Bnei Yisrael wept" (Devarim 34:8), Aharon's death was mourned by "the entire house of Israel." When Moshe passed away, only the men mourned. However, when Aharon died, everyone cried, men and women alike. This is because it was Aharon's custom to pursue peace and implant love among friends and spouses.

The wealthy man, Rabbi Yosef Shereshevsky, a relative of the gaon, Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, zt"l (the Ohr Samayach) related that he once entered Rabbi Meir Simcha's home to discover a curious sight: The Ohr Samayach, giant of the generation, was dancing in the middle of the room, together with a husband, wife, and their little child.

Rabbi Yosef was shocked, to say the least. What was going on??

After the dancing ended and the family went home, Rabbi Meir Simcha explained:

The day before, this couple had come to receive a get. They were each full of complaints and criticism.

"Do you have any children?" Rabbi Meir Simcha asked.

"Yes, we have a son."

"Where will he live after you divorce? Come back tomorrow with the boy."

The next day, they returned with their son.

Rabbi Meir took the child on his lap. With tears in his eyes, Rabbi Meir Simcha addressed the young lad. "My child, your parents are planning on making you into a living orphan, without a true father or mother. When that happens, don't roam the streets, but come live in my house. You'll be my child."

The boy, too, began crying. Then his mother joined him in weeping. The father could not remain indifferent and he, too, burst into tears. Then both parents cried out, "We are not divorcing!"

"Just as you walked in," concluded Rabbi Meir Simcha, "we were having a little dance."

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"Yiftach Hagiladi"

(Shoftim 11)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah describes Bnei Yisrael's war with Bnei Amon, mentioning the land Bnei Yisrael captured from Sichon, who had originally captured it from Amon. The parashah relates that Bnei Yisrael did not enter into war with Bnei Amon, but fought against Sichon, seizing territory that Sichon had originally captured from Amon.

Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

No Justifications

It is forbidden to relate rechilut even when one has no intention of causing hatred. And even when one believes that the person he is talking about acted correctly, he nevertheless may not relay the information.

For example: Shimon takes Reuven to task for something Reuven said or did against him. Reuven may not justify his behavior, claiming that Yehudah, too, said or acted this way against Shimon, if this will cause Shimon to harbor hard feelings towards Yehudah.





Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

Baba Sali zy" a was taking a trip to various graves of tzaddikim throughout the country. Suddenly, a loud noise near their car alerted them to a heavy truck nearby. The truck was filled to capacity with crates of succulent oranges.

"Stop the car" ordered the tzaddik.

The driver dutifully stopped, waiting to hear further instructions.

"Please ask the truck driver for an orange."

Baba Sali's driver was surprised at this request. Ordinary pleasures of this world never had a place in the ascetic mystic life of this pious tzaddik. Nevertheless, he flagged down the truck driver.

A brawny tanned young man stepped down from the truck. "Whadaya want?" he asked gruffly.

"I have a tzaddik in my car. He asks if you can give him one of your oranges," the driver said, somewhat meekly.

"No way! I don't give out no free food! You pay, you get. That's it!"

The rest of the trip continued in silence.

After about an hour, they reached the next junction, where a group of policemen blocked the road.

"What happened?" the driver asked.

"A couple of minutes ago, a truck carrying crates of oranges careened through the junction. The driver had obviously lost control of the brakes and the truck crashed into a central electric pole. The entire front of the truck was demolished. They're now trying to extricate the driver's body."

Baba Sali's driver was completely speechless and asked the tzaddik for an explanation.

"When the truck passed near us, I vividly saw the Angel of Death hovering above it. I immediately understood that the driver's life was in danger. I wanted to save him. I thought that if I took a fruit from him and made a berachah on it, the merit of his "Amen" would stand in his stead and he'd be spared the hand of justice.

"Sadly, the driver didn't agree. He forfeited this merit and see what a huge price he has paid."

Treasures

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



Held accountable

"For Cheshbon was the city of Sichon, king of the Amorites, and he had fought against the first king of Moav, taking all his land from his possession, as far as Arnon" (Bamidbar 21:26)

The Torah is generally sparse with words. Only that which has relevance for future generations is recorded. Why, then, does the Torah go to lengths describing the origin of the city Cheshbon (Bava Batra 78b)?

Cheshbon is not only a city, but it's also a state of mind. It refers to cheshbon hanefesh, a personal accounting, that one is enjoined to undertake from time to time. If we consider our actions, we'll realize that a majority of our iniquities were done with full knowledge that they were wrong. But what could we do? We were seduced by our yetzer hara. If we really know that something is forbidden, how in the world could we allow ourselves to indulge in it? This is like a young child knowing that fire burns. Will he purposely put his finger into a fire? If he has any sense, he'll keep away from it like--- fire. All the more so if he was once burned.

We are like a dog that goes back to its vomit and ingests it again. It is because we fail to make a personal reckoning of our actions. Were we to take the time at the end of each day and review the details of the day, there is no doubt we would be more aware of our deeds and desist from sin. But when life is one long rat race without reprieve, we do not allow ourselves a chance to analyze our actions. We deprive ourselves of the opportunity to observe the reality of our lives and make amends for wrongdoings before it's too late.

A wise person will make a daily accounting of his life and come to terms with the fact that there's a penalty awaiting each sin. Each of our actions should be held up to a magnifying glass. Is this worthy or worthless?

The name סִיחֹן (Sichon) hints at the word שִׁחָה (conversation). Idle conversation that has no spiritual purpose is liable to cause one to spiral downward. Chazal (Sotah 42a) state that the classes of scoffers, liars, flatterers, and speakers of lashon hara will not greet the Shechinah. The common factor among these groups is that their speech is without any thought or fear of Heaven. One who is concerned about his soul will do well to distance himself from them.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Another's pain

The Chafetz Chaim was once informed that a tremendous explosion had taken place in a certain country, and b'chasdei Shamayim, there were no casualties, just a lot of broken windows.

The Chafetz Chaim burst forth in words of praise to Hashem, that there were no casualties. But then he expressed his sorrow over

the fact that certainly some Jewish homes sustained damage, such as broken windows. "There are surely some poor families among them who cannot afford to replace their windows. They will be forced to board up their windows with planks of wood.

"These planks of wood," he continued, "will block out the sunlight. The homes will be filled with darkness, which will likely contribute to strife in the home. Chazal have told us that one of the purposes of Shabbat candles is to increase shalom bayit, as there is sadness in darkness (Shabbat 23b). People trip and become angry when it's dark."

Men of Faith

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

Rabbi Yosef was one of Rabbi Chaim's four sons. He was honest and upright. He spent all his time learning Torah and paid no attention to worldly matters. He dedicated his life to growing in Torah and Avodah, and his wife would tend to all mundane matters.

Their financial situation was difficult. Rabbi Yosef lived according to the dictum "Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation..." His righteous wife never complained, since she embraced the Torah with love. She allowed him to engage in the study of Torah all his life, abstaining from all worldly pleasures.

The following story illustrates the extent of his righteous wife's faith in tzaddikim, and how Hashem would fulfill their wishes.

The month of Nissan was approaching, but they lacked the necessary provisions for Pesach. They could not afford matzot, wine, fruit and vegetables, nor clothing and shoes for the children. The righteous woman approached her husband with a modest request:

"The situation has become unbearable. Please go to the grave of your holy father and beg him to intercede on your family's behalf so that we should have matzot, wine, meat, clothing and shoes for the children, as well as a dress for me and a suit for you. Make a list of all these things so that you should not forget anything."

Rabbi Yosef did as his wife requested. The next morning he rose early, and immediately after praying Shacharit, he took his sefer Tehillim and went to the cemetery. He approached the grave of his holy father, placed his wife's list upon the tombstone and recited the verses in Tehillim beginning with the letters of his father's name.

After he finished, Rabbi Yosef returned to his house and informed his wife that he had done as she wished. Now there was nothing left to do but await Hashem's salvation, since it would surely follow.

That night, his father, Rabbi Chaim, appeared to him in a dream and informed him that salvation was imminent. "Tomorrow," his

father instructed him, "stand by the window of your house, and an unknown merchant will come to you and provide you with all your needs. The reason for his great generosity is because, while he was sailing at sea, a big storm struck, and his ship almost capsized. Since his life was in danger, he resorted to the craft of his ancestors and began to pray, 'The G-d of Rabbi Chaim, answer me!' In addition he promised that if he would be saved, he would donate half of his possessions to my family. In the end, he did survive, and the following day he set out to fulfill his promise."

In the morning, Rabbi Yosef hurried to fulfill his father's instructions. He stood by the window of his house and waited for what was to come. The events unfolded just as his father had predicted.

While he was standing by the window, an unknown merchant approached him and asked him if he belonged to the family of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

"Yes. I am the son of the tzaddik," answered Rabbi Yosef. The merchant proceeded to tell him what had happened to him while sailing at sea, and the miracle that he had experienced following his promise that if he would be saved, he would give half of his belongings to the family of Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

"I would like to keep my promise," the man told Rabbi Yosef, "and donate to you half of my goods that were on the ship, in gratitude to Hashem for saving me from death."

Rabbi Yosef heard the merchant's story, entirely familiar with its content, and informed him, "I will not take from you more than I need to cover the upcoming holiday expenses." Rabbi Yosef listed exactly what he required for himself and his family, such as money for clothing, shoes, and provisions for the chag. The merchant promised him that he would go home and immediately arrange for everything that he had requested to be sent with his servant.

There was joyous celebration in the house of Rabbi Yosef that Pesach, and, once in a while, his wife would remind him, "You see, it is good that you took my advice and went to your father's gravesite."