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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**

At War with Evil

"If you go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hands, and you take his captives, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman and you desire her, you may take [her] for yourself as a wife"

(Devarim 21:10-11)

Rashi states that this pasuk refers to a voluntary war, as opposed to a compulsory one.

This is difficult to understand. Anyone who was "faint-hearted," meaning afraid that his sins would cause his demise, was permitted to remain at home (see Sotah 44a). So who were those who took part in a voluntary war? It was only the most righteous, those who were completely clear of sin. How was it that these people desired "a beautiful woman"? These captives were gentiles. Did the tzaddikim set eyes on gentile women?

Hashem exhorts us to "be holy because I am holy" (Vayikra 19:2). The Ramban explains, "Sanctify yourselves through that which is permitted to you." By refraining from overindulging in those pleasures that are not outright sins, one attains a level of sanctity and elevation. Abstaining from materialism has the power to disconnect a person from earthiness, and bring him to great spiritual heights.

What drove people to join a voluntary war, with all its inherent dangers? They most likely wanted to amass wealth through the booty they captured from the enemy. This mindset contradicts the instruction to "sanctify yourselves through that which is permitted to you." Money symbolizes materialism. One who is intent on increasing his bank account naturally forfeits a measure of his sanctity.

Those who offered to fight in the voluntary wars were the righteous of the nation. However, the fact that they pursued wealth to the extent that they would endanger their lives for it caused them to lower their guard and gaze at foreign women. Eventually, their yetzer hara could not withstand the test, and they desired to marry these women.

How hazardous is the pursuit of materialism! It can blind the eyes of even the wisest men. The Torah allowed these people to marry the captive

women, so that they wouldn't take them in sin. A majority of people certainly did so for the sake of Heaven, but there surely were those who had ulterior motives.

Chazal relate (Bava Metzia 85b): "How great are the deeds of Chiya." What was so special about Rabbi Chiya's deeds? He devoted his life to teaching the Jewish children. If not for his good deeds, the Torah, chas v'shalom, might have been forgotten from among our nation (see Sukkah 20a).

Rabbi Chiya planted fields of linen. From the linen, he fashioned nets which he used to catch deer. He would slaughter the deer and feed their meat to paupers. He would use their hides to make parchment upon which he wrote out the Torah, which he would then distribute among the children and teach them.

When I was young and foolish, I used to think that only someone who is famous for performing miracles deserves to be called a "tzaddik" or "gadol." But this misconception was dashed when I read how Chazal testified to Rabbi Chiya's greatness. They did not laud him for performing wonders, but only for his good character traits. It's not the miracles that make man great. Rather, it's the small things that determines man's greatness.

Whom did Hashem choose to redeem His nation from Egypt? Moshe Rabbeinu, who proved himself by displaying mercy on the helpless sheep. Good character is the basis for Torah.

The tzaddikim who joined the army of the voluntary war did so out of a desire for money. This led them to see inappropriate sights, until they desired to take foreign women as wives.

"Do not trust in yourself until the day you die" (Avot 2:4). These righteous men could not withstand the temptation to marry foreign women. This is because they yielded to the previous temptation of gaining great wealth. "In the way a person wishes to go, he is led." They sought fulfillment of lust, and they were led astray.

This maxim holds true for positive pursuits, as well. "He does the will of those who fear Him" (Tehillim 145:19). One who is careful in his actions out of Fear of Heaven receives Divine help to fulfill Hashem's word. His good deeds cause Hashem, as it were, to fulfill his altruistic wishes.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

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| 11 - Rabbi Shalom Yosef MiRuzhin |
| 12 - Rabbi Aharon Eleklasi |
| 13 - Rabbi Yosef Chaim Author of the Ben Ish Chai |
| 14 - Rabbi Yaakov Malul |
| 15 - Rabbi Nachman Batito |
| 16 - Rabbi Netanel Alshich |
| 16 - Rabbi Yichye Shneur |



Walking in their Ways

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

The danger of personal interests

Once during one of my lectures somewhere, a person in the audience sitting in front of me kept smirking, thereby to express his contempt for what I was saying and to show me that I am not saying anything original.

In my heart I agreed with this person that there was nothing new in my speech, since all of the Torah was already said to Moshe Rabbeinu in Mount Sinai; as the pasuk states, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Kohelet 1:9). However, it bothered me that this man was mocking words of the Torah, and this disturbed me greatly during my lecture.

After the speech, I called the man and asked him, "Are you aware that almost all of what I said in my speech – I heard from your esteemed Rabbi when I visited his yeshiva?"

In one second this man changed completely into a different person and exclaimed enthusiastically: "It was really a wonderful speech!" Excitedly, he turned around and continued praising and lauding the speech I delivered, although a few moments earlier he had mocked my words publicly.

We see how powerful one's bias can be; one's bias can mislead a person and make him oblivious to the truth.

This personal bias and his admiration for his Rabbi blinded him. He thought that only the words of his Rabbi and mentor were true and right, whereas the words of a different Rabbi, even though they are also true and written in the Torah and in Chazal, since he had not heard them from his Rabbi, they were not worthy of acceptance. But this is a grave mistake.

A person should listen to the words of Torah and accept them from the Rabbi that transmits them without making a distinction whether they were said by his Rabbi and teacher, or whether this Rabbi belongs to a different sector. This division derives from the Yetzer Hara, which tries to prevent a person from hearing the pure words of the Torah. Therefore, it is necessary to be cautious and humble oneself to listen to the words of the Rabbi who utters them.



Words of Our Sages

For His Sake Alone

"You shall not see your brother's ox or sheep straying, and ignore them. [Rather,] you shall return them to your brother" (Devarim 22:1)

Our Sages, throughout the generations, were extremely careful regarding the mitzvah of Hashavat Avedah, returning a lost item to its owner.

The Talmud says that when Rabbi Shmuel bar Susretai was in Rome, the queen lost an expensive piece of jewelry. She announced that whoever returned it to her within 30 days would receive a sizeable reward. However, if he returned it afterward, he would be beheaded.

Rabbi Shmuel found the piece, but waited 30 days to return it.

The queen was baffled. "Did you not hear my announcement about returning the piece within 30 days?" she asked.

"I heard it."

"So why did you wait till 30 days passed?"

"So that nobody should say that I returned it out of fear of retribution. I only did it out of desire to fulfill Hashem's command."

The stunned queen could only proclaim, "Blessed is the G-d of Yisrael."

Dancing in Tune with the Times

Rabbi Greenspan, a disciple of the yeshiva in Radin, relates:

One year, when the Chafetz Chaim was at an advanced age, the bachurim of the yeshiva in Radin celebrated the end of Simchat Torah with great festivity.

"Our joy grew and grew, as the dancing became stronger and stronger for the honor of Torah. The night wore on and the boys danced.

"Suddenly, the Chafetz Chaim appeared in the doorway. Everyone was silent, waiting to hear what he had to say.

"He did not reprimand them for the late hour. He did not say that they needed their sleep in order to wake up on time in the morning. Rather, he said, 'Kinderlach, Kinderlach! It's so special to dance for spiritual reasons. But your shoes are likely to get worn out. Where will you get money to buy new shoes?'

"We were enveloped in a cloud of warmth as we listened to his loving words. We saw how the Chafetz Chaim knew how to talk to us 'in our language.' Poverty was rampant. Whoever tore his shoes had to spend the winter with torn shoes. How great he was to notice such a small detail that escaped our eyes!

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"Sing, you barren woman who has not borne"

(Yeshayahu 54)

The connection to this Shabbat: This is one of the seven Shabbatot of consolation; the haftarot of which we read beginning with the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av.

Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Forbidden to Reveal

If Reuven sees that something was done wrong, and he asks Shimon, "Who did this?" even if Shimon realizes that Reuven suspects him, he may not inform him who is the true culprit, even if he is 100% sure of it. He may merely reply, "It wasn't me."





Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

An avrech from America asked R' Avraham Kessler, an acquaintance of the gaon, Rav Aharon Yehudah Leib Shteinman, shlita, to tell the rosh yeshiva how difficult his life was. "I am married a number of years, but have no children. I am mired in terrible debt and have no idea how I will pay it up. Additionally, I was diagnosed with cancer. These are only some of my problems. I have other ones, as well. Please ask what I should do," pleaded the young man.

Rabbi Kessler turned to R' Shteinman after the Vasikin prayers the following morning. He related the man's sad story.

The rosh yeshiva replied, "Hashem loves the tune that Bnei Yisrael sing during, Amen yehei sh'mei rabbah mevorach. Even when justice is aroused, chalilah, they still sing these holy words loudly. Hashem is very pleased with this, and overlooks their sins. Tell the man that saying these words with concentration can annul many evil decrees."

Rabbi Kessler immediately called up the avrech and relayed the rosh yeshiva's words. The man took the words to heart. He went so far as to go from one minyan to another, in order to say these words as often as possible. He did this for a period of time. Eventually, all his problems were resolved. His illness completely disappeared, his debts were settled in a miraculous way through a generous long-term loan, and his wife gave birth to a healthy baby.

Many years have passed. Yet this man still makes the rounds from minyan to minyan, proclaiming Amen yehei sh'mei rabbah mevorach will all his strength.

Treasures

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



No Questions Asked

The Torah contains logical mitzvot, as well as those that are beyond our comprehension.

"You shall make a fence around your roof" is among the logical mitzvot. In contrast, the mitzvah to send away the mother bird and take her eggs (shilu'ach haken) is beyond our comprehension. Had the Torah not commanded this mitzvah, we would never imagine doing such a seemingly merciless act.

The mitzvah of erecting a fence around a roof, which is easy to understand, teaches us that we are expected to fulfill all of the mitzvot, logical or not. The Torah is our guide for life, the means by which we fulfill our purpose in this world. For this reason, we are enjoined to fulfill also those mitzvot that are difficult to comprehend.

When we do a logical mitzvah, we should do it with the intention of obeying Hashem's command, not because it makes sense to us.

A woman once asked for words of inspiration as she was on her way to burying her two sons who were killed in a car accident. In her greatness of spirit, she asked no questions and had no complaints. She only asked that I help strengthen her faith at this very difficult time when she was parting with her sons.

The only way to cope with such a situation is through reinforcing one's belief that everything is from Him, for the good or the seemingly bad. If one accustoms himself to living according to Hashem's will and accepting his lot, then he has no complaints, even when things are hard. He accepts Heaven's decree with perfect love, knowing that whatever Hashem does is for the good. Even if he cannot understand it, he fully believes that Hashem has His own calculations. Who are we to fathom His reasons?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Appetite for Blood

The nations of Amon and Moav tried to kill out our people by hiring Bilaam to curse us. Why, then, does the Torah forbid them from joining our nation “for they did not greet you with bread and water”?

The Dubno Maggid explains: From here we learn a basic truth. The desire for murder stemmed from the fact that “they did not greet you with bread and

water.” When one lives his life with selfishness and egoism, ignoring the needs of others, he is liable to reach the point even of murder, rachmana litzlan. If he will be blocked from attaining his desires, he will not think twice about removing those who stand in his way.

Therefore, the Torah doesn’t mention that Amon and Moav wished to destroy our nation. That was only an outcome of an underlying germ. The root of their evilness lay in the fact that they didn’t consider the needs of others, as demonstrated by their lack of generosity.

Men of Faith

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

A Sensitive Security Situation

The security situation in Morocco in 2003 (5763) was sensitive. Many suicide bombers tried to target crowded Jewish centers, and the Al-Qaeda terror organization was threatening.

In fact, on one Shabbat evening in Sivan, ten suicide bombers schemed to blow themselves up in various Jewish locations. They planned to detonate the bombs near the Jews after the Shabbat meal. This is in itself a miracle, since they did not set off the bombs in the middle of the meal.

They also conspired to blow themselves up in the Jewish cemetery of Casablanca. This was very unusual; what purpose could they have in blowing themselves up in a cemetery? Miraculously, the suicide bombers blew themselves up in Jewish locations which were empty of people. In the end, approximately fifty citizens were killed, but not one Jew was even hurt, Baruch Hashem.

Because of the unstable situation, the hilula of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol was almost cancelled. Many people were frightened to attend because of the dangerous situation. I myself did not know what to do. Should I continue with the preparations for the hilula? Finally, I decided to travel to Morocco and celebrate as usual, come what may.

The hilula that year was so extraordinary that it is difficult to describe it in words. Many Jews came to pray at the grave of the holy tzaddik. There were almost more soldiers and policemen than people in the cemetery. For every Jewish participant, there were three policemen, guarding him.

It is interesting to note that when Selichot were recited near the grave on Motza’ei Shabbat, at a time when Morocco was teeming with suicide bombers, the sounds of the

prayers carried through the entire area. Who would believe that such an event would be possible in Morocco, considering that the Islamic movement had become substantially strengthened over the last few years? The hilula caused a tremendous kiddush Hashem.

Furthermore, in the great merit of the tzaddik, all government employees, among them, the mayor of Mogador, who assisted the Jews participating in the hilula, were rewarded by the king of Morocco and were raised in rank.

They themselves admitted that this had never happened before. Because they helped the Jews who had come to pray at the grave of the tzaddik, Hashem caused them all to be raised in rank. It was obviously only due to the merits of the tzaddik.

Another exceptional facet of this event was the special arrangement at the airport. Because of the instability in Mogador, it had been shut down. Only at the onset of the hilula was it opened so that the flights coming from all over the world, bringing hundreds of Jews, would be able to land. The project of hosting all the Jewish people coming to the hilula cost the Moroccan government an enormous sum of money, and we are grateful to them. May it be His Will that they continue in their good deeds, honoring Am Yisrael wherever they are.

The Arabs themselves frankly declare that from the time that the Jews left Mogador, the status of the city declined, and the blessings that they had previously enjoyed ceased. When they saw the Jews coming back to the city on the hilula, they exclaimed, “Here is the blessing returning!”

May we sanctify Hashem’s Name in public by going in His ways. Then, all the nations of the world will respect us, hastening the coming of Mashiach, who will redeem us speedily, may it be in our days.