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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, shlitia
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Maskil L'David

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

The Descent of the Soul in this World

"And the L-rd said to Abram, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you" (Bereishit 12:1)

There are commentators who explain that the pasuk is referring to the neshamah of a person. It is a command to the neshamah to go forth from its "land," which is the land of the souls, and from its "birthplace" – under the Throne of Glory, and go "to the land that I will show you," meaning this world. This is because the neshamah cannot rise to great heights in the World of Truth, but only in this world. Hashem tells the neshamah, "And I will make you into a great nation," since by fighting the Yetzer Hara one creates spiritual worlds and brings about rectification of the celestial spheres, bringing pleasure to Hashem. At first, the neshamah does not want to descend to this world, as Chazal state (Avot 4:22) "For against your will you were created." But Hashem commands it "Go forth – for your benefit and for your good." Only in this world it is possible to accomplish rectification, and in fact, Chazal conclude (ibid.) "Against your will you die," because after the neshamah perceives that it can rise to great heights by overcoming the Yetzer Hara, it refuses to leave this world.

Furthermore, the sefer Magen David, written by the saintly mekubal Rabbi David Peretz, zy"ta, explains how this pasuk is referring to the neshamah, and I would like to explain the distinction between this world and the World to Come. This world is called "the world of falsehood," while the World to Come is called "the world of truth." Perhaps this is the reason why Hashem brought the Torah, which is called "the Torah of truth," down to this world from the World to Come, and He did not place it directly in this world at the time of Creation, because the Torah is truth and it is impossible to have it originate in this world of falsehood. So we find that Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Above and defeated the angels and they gave him gifts. The Angel of Death also gave him a gift by revealing to him the secret of the Ketoret (Yalkut Shimoni Bamidbar remez 752). Although it was essentially a contradiction to his role of taking souls-- since through the secret of the Ketoret, Moshe was able to prevent it from bringing death to the people-- but we can explain that since he was situated in the World of Truth, he pursued pure truth, without any further considerations.

Actually, it is difficult to understand why this world is called a world a falsehood. After all, Hashem fashioned truth, and as we find, the seal of Hashem is truth, so how is it possible to say that Hashem created a world of falsehood? Hashem is the symbol of truth. Thus, it seems that this world is truly also a world of truth, however, since the Yetzer Hara is found in this world, it has the ability to turn truth into falsehood. This is the ways of the Yetzer Hara; to portray falsehood as truth. For instance, a person can stand in prayer before Hashem, which is truth, but his mind can be preoccupied with other thoughts, which is falsehood. Also, when a person eats, the essential act is a service of Hashem; the purpose of eating is to give

ourselves strength in order to serve Hashem. However, when a person eats for his enjoyment alone, he is living in a world of falsehood. Thus, the mission of a person in this world is to turn himself into a truthful person, and this is only possible through the holy Torah which is the definition of truth. Therefore, Hashem brought the Torah down to this world from the World of Truth, so that man would not claim that he transgressed the words of the Torah since it was given in a world of falsehood. This is why Hashem brought it down from the World to Come, which is the World of Truth, and through the giving of the Torah, truth descended to the world from the World to Come to this world. Consequently, by learning Torah it is possible to overcome falsehood.

The Gemara (Yoma 35b) states that three people come before Hashem, and Hashem asks them why they were not engaged in Torah: Were you poorer than Hillel? Were you bothered more by the Yetzer Hara than Yosef? etc. They were engaged in Torah and overcame all the challenges that this world presents. If so, it proves that the Torah transcends this world, as Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b), "I created the Evil Desire, but I [also] created the Torah, as its antidote." Thus, although the Torah descended to this world, it remained entirely holy, and it is placed in a corner where anyone who wants can acquire it (Avot 2:12). Only the Torah has the ability to detach a person from the vanities of this world and connect him to truth.

Similarly we find regarding Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi that before his death he raised his ten fingers upward and declared that they can testify that he did not enjoy this world for the sake of enjoyment (Ketubot 104a). Although he was exceedingly wealthy, he did not enjoy his wealth at all, because he knew that wealth belongs to the world of falsehood. Really, Hashem wants to grant pleasure to his people and therefore created wealth, so that the material possessions would be used to serve Him. However tzaddikim maintain "sanctify yourself [even] in what is permitted to you." Regarding other people, Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi did not maintain that they must deny themselves the pleasures of this world, as it is stated that even radishes and lettuce were never missing from his table. But for himself he did not allow himself to delight from this world, because for him it was unnecessary and just fleeting pleasures. We can explain what is stated that radish (called "tzenon" in Hebrew) never was missing from his table because "tzenon" comes from the root word "tzinun" (chill), which cools off the influence of the Yetzer Hara. Just as we see concerning Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who sufficed by eating only a measure of carob each day (Berachot 17b), since he knew that every material object potentially possesses the influence of the Yetzer Hara, even things which seem necessary to man.

By toiling in Torah, a man can turn all the falsehood of this world into truth, as it is stated (Mishlei 3:6), "Know Him in all your ways." A person can serve Hashem in all his actions; eating, drinking, resting, and by all other physical functions, when he performs them for the sake of serving Hashem and not for his personal pleasure. Then they are considered a part of Avodat Hashem.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

- 8 - Rabbi Nachum of Horodna
- 9 - Rabbi Shimon Shkop Author of "Sha'arei Yosher"
- 10 - Rabbi Refael Aharon ben Shimon Author of "Nahar Mitzrayim"
- 11 - Rachel Imeinu
- 12 - Rabbi Ze'ev Wolf (Disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov)
- 12 - Rabbi Yehudah Tzadka Rosh Yeshiva of "Porat Yosef"
- 14 - Rabbi Avraham Elimelech hy"d The Admor of Karlin Stalin



Walking in their Ways

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

A Complete Recovery

A man from New York once came to see me. His son was in critical condition, diagnosed with cancer, rachmana litzlan. This man asked that I pray on behalf of his son in the merit of my forefathers. I did so, and with Heavenly kindness, the boy recovered. I told the man, "Now you must consecrate your son to Hashem. Resolve to make him into a true ben Torah!"

The man heard me out, but it was hard for him to accept my order.

"Honored Rav, let's make a deal," he replied. "This son is very clever. Let him become a businessman, while my second son will be devoted to Torah."

But I was adamant. "Let him be both a businessman as well as a Torah scholar."

He accepted my words. Today, he deals in business, but his Torah study is his main interest. Every day, he sets aside a few hours for Torah study. Baruch Hashem, to date, he has finished the entire Shas twice.

The second son went in his brother's footsteps. He is a true ben Torah, whose life revolves around the Gemara. The man has merited seeing true Jewish nachat from both of his sons.

Heading Toward Hope

The atmosphere in the kollel of our institutions in Paris was one of gaiety, as Purim was on its way. Suddenly, a young man, Uriel, entered, his face boding no good. He immediately walked up to me and burst into tears. It took some time until he could contain himself. He pointed to his head while he sobbed.

I thought he was gesturing that he suffered from strong migraines. I tried calming him down and blessed him in the merit of my forefathers and his firm faith that his headaches should disappear.

But the blessing did not work its usual charm. He would not be appeased. He had undergone testing that day, and the results indicated a tumor in his head. I instructed him to repeat the tests and promised him that everything would be fine.

The next day, he excitedly reported that the doctors were in utter shock at the surprising results. "They saw and were indeed astounded," as the pasuk states in Tehillim. The day before, they clearly saw a tumor, and today it was completely gone.

When I first saw Uriel, I had assumed that he suffered from strong headaches which could go away at any given time. That was why I blessed him with such confidence. Had I known that it was a question of a cancerous growth, I might not have been so assured of his complete recovery and might not have prayed so earnestly.

But Hashem arranged it that I would not be aware of the gravity of the situation. I prayed sincerely, and the merit of this prayer, coupled with my pure faith that the young avrech would recover, indeed earned him recovery.

It was in the merit of my forefathers, zy"ra, that my prayers soared heavenward. The merit of their Torah study brought Hashem to have pity on this man and send him a refuah sheleimah.



Words of Our Sages

Gems on the Parashah From the Torah Sages

Are we obligated to the Torah?

"And the souls they had acquired in Haran" (Bereishit 12:5)

Rashi offers two explanation about this:

The first: "Whom he had brought under the wings of the Shechinah. Avraham would convert the men, and Sarah would convert the women, and Scripture ascribes to them [a merit] as if they had made them."

The second: "The simple meaning of the verse is: the slaves and maidservants that they had acquired for themselves, as in [the verse] (below 31:1): "He acquired (עשה) all this wealth" [an expression of acquisition]."

Unkelos translates this a bit differently, "And the souls that they made obligated to the Torah." This implies that the word "asu - made" can mean "made them obligated."

Let us contemplate what it means to be obligated. When a piece of property has a lien by another party, even if it is sold many times, the lien remains. Sometimes the opposite is true. A person buys property and it belongs to him without question, but even so he does not have total ownership of the property because someone else has a lien on it.

This is true regarding the Torah. There are those who are obligated to the Torah, and every spare moment they engage in it. However, sometimes one may have to take care of other matters, but in essence he is obligated to the study of Torah. He will not abandon his learning even while taking care of other necessary things, and as soon as he finishes his chores, he returns to his studies. On the other hand, there are people that although they sit and study Torah all day, every small thing distracts them from their studies. Every event that takes place becomes their business. Every tale of gossip or news or politics catches their attention. Such people, even though they are officially sitting and learning, are not worthy of being considered as "obligated to the Torah."

The Haftarah

"Why should you say, O Jacob"

(Yeshayahu 40, 41)

The connection to the parashah:

The haftarah tells about Avraham's war against the four kings, as it stated, "Who aroused from the East, [the one] whom righteousness accompanied? He placed nations before him and over kings He gave him dominion," etc. And this war is discussed in our parashah.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Need not be concerned

If he has circumstantial evidence that his friend plans to harm him physically or financially, even if he has not heard about it until now from anyone, he is allowed to investigate the matter by interrogating people to find out if he truly plans to harm him, and to figure out how to protect himself, and he does not need to be concerned that because of this other people will begin to speak derogatorily about him.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

In the previous column we saw that by loving one another we can merit taking part in building the Beit Hamikdash and in the final Redemption, which we await each day. If we do not do everything in our power to merit hastening the redemption, we cannot wash our hands and claim that we did enough through our prayers for the building of Yerushalayim and the coming of Mashiach.

Now we will take a deeper look:

Let us imagine that when we will stand before the Heavenly Court Above and the prosecutor will present our faults, he will claim, no less and no more, that we prevented and delayed the redemption. Moreover, he will say that if it were not for our actions, it is possible that the Beit Hamikdash would already have been built by now, and Mashiach would have hurried to redeem us long ago.

Can we imagine what a shame it will be? What disgrace we would feel? How terrible will be the shame and disgrace!

But, of course, we will not accept his accusations and we will demand an explanation: How can it be? How is it possible that we, who fear Hashem and are true people, and shed tears like water for the building of Yerushalayim and for the imminent redemption are accused of such grave accusations!

What about the prosecutor?

He will agree with every word we say... He will admit that we observed the Torah and performed mitzvot with precision, and will even confirm that we prayed from the depths of our hearts for the redemption... Yet he will continue to claim that because of us the redemption was delayed and we missed being delivered from our Exile. It is because the love for our brethren was absent from our hearts, and it was replaced instead by hate and controversy... "The lack of brotherhood, lack of love, and the numerous controversies caused by your conduct prevented and delayed the redemption!" the prosecutor will declare. Ultimately, the Heavenly Court will rule that he is right!!

Is it possible?

Certainly... Let us listen to the words of the "Pele Yoetz" (concerning Hatred), who wrote:

"How terrible is the iniquity of baseless hatred which caused the destruction of our glorious Beit Hamikdash, and as long as we do not cease to sin in this way, we cannot be redeemed, as Chazal state: "Hashem declared: You have caused Me to destroy my home and to burn my Temple because of baseless hatred. Seek peace and you will be redeemed, as it is stated: "Request the peace of Jerusalem."

We see clearly that as long as there is hatred among Klal Yisrael, and brotherly love is lacking, it is impossible to be redeemed!

Thus, how will we excuse ourselves when we will be accused in Heaven that because of the hatred that existed between us and our fellows we prevented the building of the Beit Hamikdash and the future redemption? Every word will be correct and accurate, and the accusations will be true and well-founded!

The Chafetz Chaim expounded on this matter in his sefer "Ahavat Yisrael" and wrote the following:

"We supplicate in prayer and plead, especially in the Mussaf service, for the building of the Beit Hamikdash, and we anticipate it each and every day, but we do not reflect on the cause for the delay in the building of the Beit Hamikdash. If the dreadful offense of baseless hatred had the potential to destroy our Beit Hamidash, even though they possessed the merit of Torah and Gemilut Chassadim, all the more so it has the potential to delay its rebuilding today if we do not devote all our efforts to distancing ourselves from this sin and removing all hatred from our hearts."

The words of the Kohen Gadol of Radin are piercing: We pray for the building of the Beit Hamikdash; we anticipate the reestablishment of Yerushalayim, but we do not contemplate that at the same time we are causing the delay of our redemption through our actions! If the sin of baseless hatred had the potential to destroy the Beit Hamikdash, how much more so it is the factor that delays its rebuilding.

Treasures

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



The honor given to Avraham through glorifying Hashem's Name in the world

"And the L-rd said to Avraham, "Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will aggrandize your name, and [you shall] be a blessing. (Bereishit 12:1-2)

Hashem commands Avraham to go from his land, and in return Hashem promises Avraham that He will give him blessing, wealth, children, honor and fame, and that Avraham's name will spread from one end of the world to the other. In light of the above, one may wonder; was Avraham looking for fame and glory for himself? It is clear that the tzaddik despised it, and a righteous person like Avraham Avinu did not seek it. Furthermore, if Hashem promised Avraham such bountiful blessings, then what was challenging about this? After all, this was one of the ten trials that Avraham was tested with. What is the trial if the reward is so lavish?

With the help of Hashem, I arrived at the same explanation as the sefer "Magen David" brings, which was written by one of the Mekubalim of Morocco, who says that every Jew was created in the image of Hashem and his neshamah is derived from Above. We recite a blessing each day, "For not having made me a gentile," but it seems that we could have recited, "For having made me a Jew," so as not to incite the wrath of the gentiles. Why is the blessing not in the positive state, thanking Hashem for making us a Jew? We can explain that there are Jews whose conduct resembles those of the gentiles, and if he would bless Hashem for having made him a Jew, this would constitute a blessing in vain, since his conduct resembling the gentiles disgraces Hashem's Name and therefore Hashem's Name cannot be associated with him. Thus, we bless Hashem for not having made us a gentile so that it should not be a blessing in vain.

This can clarify the matter regarding Avraham Avinu. Hashem promised him honor and status, not in a negative way, but promised him that by going in Hashem's ways, the honor of Hashem would fill the world, and consequently the honor of Avraham, as well. This is because Avraham carries the name of Hashem in his name, as we find that the letter "hay" was added to Avram's name, changing his name to Avraham. Thus his honor is a reflection of the honor of Heaven, and not honor that brings one to pride.

As for the second question, what was his trial in the matter, we can answer that the difficulty of the challenge was that Avraham was obligated to glorify Hashem's Name, despite all the obstacles on the way. Avraham said, "Who am I? Where will I draw the strength from to succeed? After all, I am only dust and ashes, so where will I get the ability and strength to fulfill this mission in its entirety? This was, in essence, the trial that Hashem tested Avraham with. He would see how he would fulfill the mission given to him, which was to spread the glory of Hashem in the world.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Seeing the tzaddik's countenance

“And the L-rd said to Abram, “Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you” (Bereishit 12:1)

The literal meaning of this pasuk is that Hashem told Avraham to go forth from his land and go to the land that He would show him.

Rabbi Bunim of Peshischa, zy”a, offers another explanation, based on what is written in the holy sefarim

that seeing the face of a tzaddik enlightens a person to the truth. Therefore, Hashem told Avraham to go to the land, so that I will “show you off” and have the natives see you.

This is the meaning of “Go forth from your land and from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.” “That I will show you” is an outcome, signifying that I will show you off and have the natives view your holy countenance so that they should acquire fear of Heaven and sanctity as a result of looking at you and observing your saintly ways.



Men of Faith

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

The tzaddik and mekubal Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan, the son of the well-known tzaddik Rabbi Hadan, was born in 1865 (5625), in the city of Mogador. Already at a young age, he dedicated himself to learning Torah and Avodat Hashem, which was his sole aspiration and joy. He became known as an outstanding gaon, well versed in all the Rishonim and Acharonim. He was likened to “a cemented cistern that loses not a drop.”

The Jewish population in Casablanca increased extensively after Rabbi Chaim Hakatan moved there from Mogador in the last years of his life. He lived in Casablanca for over three years, and there he accomplished his main achievements, becoming famous worldwide for his righteousness, benevolence, and holiness. He was eventually buried in Casablanca, and his grave is in the Jewish cemetery there.

The thriving Jewish community of Casablanca boasted a population of over 200,000 Jews. They received Rabbi Chaim Hakatan with great ceremony and honor. The Jewish congregation, who recognized his worthiness and wished to have him come live among them, provided him with an apartment, so that he should be able to engage in Torah without worrying about the cost of rent.

Chazal warn, “Be careful with the children of the poor, because from them Torah will emerge.” Rabbi Chaim would constantly repeat these words, not only uttering them, but truly living by them. He would always be found in the company of the poor and needy. He preferred sitting among them rather than sitting amidst the rich and prominent. He constantly offered his assistance to the poor people in every matter.

Every day, he would go visit poor families, who ate only vegetables or bread accompanied by a cup of beer. He would

dine with them, partaking of their simple meals, in order to demonstrate that he preferred their meager portions to the delicacies and choice meat of the wealthy.

At the end of his visit, Rabbi Chaim would customarily bless the family members, especially the head of the household, and offer words of encouragement, declaring that he enjoyed his meals with them more than the banquets of the more affluent people. He would also add that fear of Heaven is acquired specifically through suffering, poverty, and pain. Moreover, it is known that precisely from poor people, great Torah scholars emerge, as is told about the Tanna, Rabbi Yehuda bar Illa’i, that six of his students would share one tallit.

Rabbeinu adds, “Many people have told me that this was his custom; to always eat among the poor people, sitting on the floor as they did.”

The impressive image and shining countenance of the tzaddik made a lasting impression on each and every Jew who visited Mogador. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan would sit at the gates of the city and wait for guests arriving from other cities, in order to grant them the opportunity of sharing in the mitzvah of 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.