

*Published by Mosdot Orot Chaim U'Moshe in Israel**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 significance of the Attribute of Chessed**

“But you shall go to my land and to my birthplace, and you shall take a wife for my son, for Isaac.”

(Bereishit 24:4)

This is the oath that Avraham made Eliezer swear – to take a wife for Yitzchak only from his homeland, which is Charan. The Ran asks in his sefer of lectures why did Avraham require Eliezer to take a wife for Yitzchak specifically from his homeland and not from Eretz Canaan. After all, both were idolaters; so what was the difference between them?

I would like to suggest that even though the people of Charan were also idolaters, nevertheless, they possessed the attribute of chessed (loving-kindness), and one who has this attribute, even if his behavior is corrupt, he will eventually improve and become worthy. This is as it is stated in Tehillim (Tehillim 89:3), “Olam Chessed yibaneh – The world will be built with kindness”. “The world” refers to man, who is a miniature world. This implies that if a person possesses the attribute of chessed – he will “yibaneh” (lit. be built) and develop into a worthy individual. This was what characterized Charan, as opposed to Canaan.

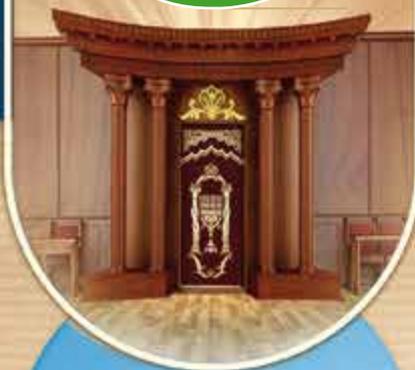
In the land of Canaan there was Sodom and Gomorrah, for whom charity and loving-kindness were anathema. Whoever sought charity or whoever gave tzedaka would be killed immediately. We see regarding the king of Sodom that he asked Avraham to return the people to him so that he would have control over them. Also we see regarding Efron Hachitti, Chazal explain that his name is written with the letter “vav” missing, implying that he was a person who talked a lot but did little. At the beginning he promised to give the plot to bury Sarah for free; but in the end, he did not give it until he received an enormous sum of four hundred shekels of “legal currency” – which was the most valuable currency. At first he said to Avraham, “A [piece of] land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is it between me and you?” Rashi explains, “between me and you” implies they were friends. When did they get to be friends? It was only in order to get the money that the friendship was forged. This was the wickedness of Efron. He did not consider that Avraham was faced with the death of his beloved wife, and instead he bargained with him over the price unfairly, and in the end received an excessive amount and only then allowed Avraham to bury Sarah.

On the other hand, although the people of Charan were wicked, they possessed the attribute of chessed. Regarding Lavan it is written that when

he heard that Eliezer had come to Charan and he saw the jewels that his sister had received, he coveted the wealth of Eliezer and went out to kill him. When Eliezer saw him coming with a sword, he said the ineffable Name of Hashem and flew up in the mid-air with all his ten camels. Then Lavan realized that he would not succeed in killing him and he declared: “Come, you who are blessed of the Lord. Why should you stand outside, when I have cleared the house, and a place for the camels?” (Bereishit 24:32). Rashi explains that the words “cleared the house” implies that he emptied his home from all idols. Why did he empty his house from idols? He must have wanted to host Eliezer in his home and he knew that he would not agree to come to a house with idolatry. But he had just set out to kill him! Then why did he first empty his house from idolatry? This is because even when he set out to murder, he took into consideration that perhaps he would not succeed in overcoming Eliezer, and the attribute of chessed, buried deep in his heart was aroused. Thus he went about cleaning his house from all the idols, in the event that Eliezer would prevail and then he would be able to come to his house.

Therefore, Avraham warned Eliezer to search for a wife specifically in Charan, since they at least possessed the attribute of chessed. Indeed, Eliezer found Rivkah, who was outstandingly righteous. Even though she grew up among wicked people, she did not learn from their ways. The proof for this is that when she arrived at Beer Sheva and saw Yitzchak from a distance, she fell upon her face, because she saw that the Shechinah was on him. The Rema of Pani writes that after the Akeidah, the angels took Yitzchak and taught him Torah for three years, and this is why the Shechinah resided upon him.

How did Rivkah turn out to be righteous? It is because of her outstanding attribute of chessed. This is what Eliezer saw – how a three-year-old girl offered to provide water for all the camels and the crew, and with all her meager strength drew water again and again until all the camels finished drinking. I calculated that she had pumped at least a hundred liters for each camel, which is the amount of water that an average camel drinks, and she did so for ten camels. Thus she drew an incredible amount of water for the camels, besides what she drew for the crew. The attribute of chessed that was inherent in her character is what gave her the strength to draw such an enormous quantity of water. Therefore, she was rewarded with the blessings of Sarah Imeinu in her challah, candles, and Cloud of Glory immediately upon her arrival to Yitzchak’s home.

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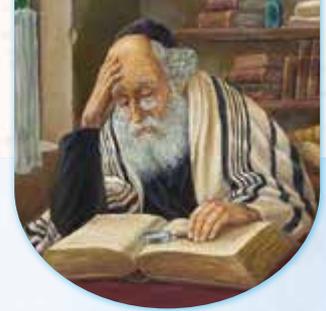
27 - Rabbi Shaul Chaba

28 - Rabbi Dhr Shraga



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

Gems on the Parashah From the Torah Sages

Lineage Is a Tool to Serve Hashem

I often meet ignorant Jews who take pride in their rabbinic lineage, as their families boast a history of rich Torah giants. This makes them secure in the belief that they will merit a portion in the World to Come. They themselves, though, don't bother to invest in Avodat Hashem and fritter away their lives on inanities.

A man once approached me, all smiles, as though we were old acquaintances. When he saw that I did not recognize him, he asked me, surprised, "How can it be that the Rav doesn't recognize me? I'm the son of so-and-so, a great tzaddik, the son of so-and-so, a tzaddik in his own right. These were great tzaddikim of note. Certainly the Rav knows who they were!"

I replied, "Of course I heard of your righteous father. I even knew your grandfather, who was a great Torah scholar. I knew these men by the merit of their Torah knowledge. But you, I don't recognize at all. I never even heard about you! How do you have the audacity to take pride in the Torah of your fathers, when you do not continue in their distinguished ways?"

The Jew's mission in this world is to exert himself in Avodat Hashem and acquire a portion in Torah and mitzvot. These merits will advocate on his behalf in Olam Haba, and his neshamah will have the honor of sitting among the neshamot of his righteous fathers. But he should not rely only on the merit of his ancestors to protect him from harm.

The maxim "When will my deeds reach those of my forefathers?" applies only to those who continue the legacy of their ancestors by serving Hashem as they should. But often, the descendants glorify themselves in their lineage but fail to uphold the connection to their exalted past. They thereby hurt and shame their holy fathers in the Upper Worlds.

How does one inquire about a shidduch?

"So I came today to the fountain" (Bereishit 24:42)

Rashi points out there that Eliezer emphasizes that he arrived specifically today, in order to hint at the miracle that occurred to him: "So I came today" – today I left and today I arrived, since he leaped over the land in a miraculous manner.

And indeed, why was this miracle necessary?

There is a beautiful explanation for this presented in the Haggadah of Pesach "U'matok ha'or" through the following story:

A respectable shidduch was suggested to an important Rabbi for his son – the daughter of a wealthy man, who promised full support for the young couple. Since the wealthy man lived far away, the Rabbi and his son set out on the long journey. When the night arrived, they stopped at an inn on the way. Before morning, prior to leaving for the rest of the journey, they approached the innkeeper and asked if he knew the wealthy man, Rabbi Moshe.

"Yes. I know him," the innkeeper told them.

"What do you have to say about him?" they inquired.

"What can I tell you about Rav Moshe? When I extend my hand to greet him with a "Shalom Aleichem" I quickly count my fingers, in order to make sure that none of them remain with him... he is a crook, a fraudster, a thief and a crook." He continued to describe to them more of the corrupt behavior of the wealthy man, until they were convinced to withdraw from the marriage deal and return home empty-handed.

On the way back, the Rabbi said to his son: "Now I understand why Eliezer needed a miracle to arrive without delay when he went to find a wife for Yitzchak. Imagine if he would have trudged slowly by foot and arrived at some inn and inquired about Lavan and Betuel. What would he have been told? Lavan (lit. white), aside from his name was totally black. Betuel was referred to in a derogatory way. Of course, the shidduch would never have materialized..."

Therefore, Hashem arranged to miraculously shorten his journey. In this way Eliezer arrived quickly without inquiring about the family in advance.

Regarding this it is told about Rabbi Elyashiv, zt"l, who once stayed in a retreat in Netanya – and what did he do there? He learned and learned and learned continuously and enthusiastically in a melodious chant. He arose, as usual, at two o'clock in the morning and began studying with zest.

When he heard that one of the guests, the wife of one of the Rosh Yeshivas mention that the sound of his learning disturbed her sleep, he immediately responded: "She's really right. This is a vacation retreat, and she came here to rest." From then on, he only whispered throughout the night!

Dozens of years passed, and the grandson of Rabbi Elyashiv, zt"l, came to consult with him. A shidduch was suggested to his son – the grandson of a well-known Rosh Yeshiva. As soon as he heard the name, he jumped up and declared: "We cannot have marriage relations with these people."

"Why not?" asked the grandson.

Then the Rabbi told him that the grandmother, who was the wife of the well-known Rosh Yeshiva, was disturbed by the enchanting sound of his Torah and demanded that he lower his voice. It follows that the children at home were not raised with a love for Torah. Such in-laws are not suitable for us!

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week:

"And king David was old"

(Melachim I 1)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah states: "And king David was old, he came into his old age," and also the parashah states: "And Avraham was old, he came into his old age." David appointed Shlomo as king before his death, just as is stated in the parashah that Avraham bequeathed all that he had to Yitzchak.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

Becoming enemies

There is a wicked nature amongst people who habitually speak lashon hara that they always like to ask what so and so said about them, even if it really does not matter. And when others do not want to divulge what was said, they entreat them excessively until they tell them what so and so said about them. Usually the words consist of derogatory content, and they accept the report as absolute truth and consequently become enemies with "so and so."



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

In the previous series we explained how brotherly love can bring the geulah. This week we will relate a wonderful story that Rabbi Aharon Margolit, shlita, told, which illustrates how a big heart can sense the pain of one's fellow.

A few months ago I was asked to purchase a few items that we were out of at home, so I set out to the local grocery store and scoured the shelves, filling my shopping cart with the necessary products. When I finished selecting all the items on my shopping list, I headed to the cashier. Since this was a local grocery store, there was only one cashier at the time, and the line was not short. Although I was in a rush, I had no choice but to wait patiently in line until it was my turn.

In front of me stood a Jewish scholar with a small bag, in which he had collected a few items. The line advanced slowly, and we all waited for endless minutes. Then when it was finally the turn of the scholar standing in front of me to pay for his purchase, he suddenly stepped out of the line, put down the bag of groceries and left the store.

No one in the store could understand what he was doing. After all, he had waited in line like the rest of us for so long. Why just as his turn came did he return the groceries and leave the store?

No one understood the reason for his actions, however since he had left the line, my turn had come to pay, and I began to remove the goods from the cart and transfer them to the register. After receiving the bill, I paid for the purchase and left the grocery store. When I exited the store, I saw the same scholar standing and waiting outside. I looked him over and was so curious to find out the reason for his strange behavior. Finally, I could restrain myself no longer. I went over to him and asked him, "Rabbi, can I ask you one small question?" "Certainly," he replied. "Please explain to me, since I'm sure there is a good reason for your actions, why did you leave the line suddenly and return the groceries that you wanted to buy? After all, your turn came after such a long wait. Why did you just then leave the store?"

The man lowered his head in humiliation and said: "Since you asked – I will explain why I did it."

"My wife noticed that we were missing baby formula and diapers. She asked me to go to the grocery store and buy them. I'm not sure if you noticed, but at the moment when it was my turn to place my things on the register, the cashier notified the manager that her shift had ended and that she had finished working for the day and that she was in a rush to return home after a long day of work. She got up and left the store, and instead the manager asked one of the other workers to handle the cash register.

This worker is a member of our community, and she sat by the register waiting for me to place what I had purchased before her. However, everyone knows that this woman is one who does not have any children for many years, and for many years now she has been pleading, crying and praying to the Creator of the World to grant her a child of her own."

"As soon as I saw her, I knew that when I would pass the diapers and baby formula to her cash register, she would be greatly pained. I do not have a shadow of a doubt that holding diapers and baby formula in her hands, when she does not have children of her own, but yearns for them from the depths of her soul, is the most bitter agony that exists! Therefore, I immediately left the line and put my things aside, so that she would not notice anything. The main thing was not to cause grief to the woman through my purchase. The necessary items I will buy in a different store."

Treasures

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



The challenges of Avraham Avinu strengthen us

"And Sarah died in Kiriath Arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her"
(Bereishit 23:2)

The midrash explains (Tanchuma Vayeira 23) that Sarah died because the Satan told her that Avraham brought his son as a sacrifice and nearly slaughtered him. She died in anguish.

Avraham Avinu stood the test of the Akeidah bravely, even though a father usually has compassion for his son. Avraham conquered his mercy and was ready to slaughter his son Yitzchak. Even after Hashem told him, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him," Avraham said that at least he would make a small cut or even just let some blood. He could have rejoiced that Hashem had commanded him not to touch Yitzchak; why did he want to hurt him?

The reason is because when tzaddikim begin to perform a mitzvah, they do not want to stop, until Hashem commanded him not to do "the slightest thing to him," because "I will make a great nation from him." This is a lesson for us. When we begin performing a mitzvah, we must dedicate ourselves to completing it.

Avraham Avinu, who was already permitted to go home happy that he withstood the difficult trial, and also his son remained alive, arrived home to find that his wife had died, and moreover, she died because of the Akeida. Certainly, any other person would have resented it greatly that not only did he withstand such a difficult trial, but also was anguished by his wife's death; is this Torah and is this its reward? However, Avraham was not angry at all, but immediately engaged in her burial and came to "eulogize Sarah and cry over her." Regarding his son Yitzchak, he took him to the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever. Avraham did not eulogize Sarah by mentioning his personal pain, but eulogized her enormous righteousness, as Chazal say about the pasuk, "And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years." (Bereishit 23:1), "When she was one hundred years old, she was like twenty-years-old regarding sin." This was a big loss to the world, leaving a great void in her death.

There was a severe economic crisis in Venezuela. Of course, the Jews prayed a lot to Hashem to restore their prosperous economy. However, the situation did not improve, because perhaps it is preferable not to be engulfed in materialism. When the economy thrives, there usually is a spiritual decline, so it may be better for people to be poor than to be rich. In fact, during the economic crisis, many Jews in Venezuela did teshuvah. Similarly, during the elections in the United States, the Jews prayed hard that a certain candidate should win, and I also prayed for it. However, I made sure to stress in my prayers that it should only turn out so if it would be good for the Jews. Who actually knows if the one who we think will be good for the Jews, will actually turn out good in terms of security and spiritually.

Sometimes people come to me to ask for a blessing about winning the lottery, or to pass a driving test, etc. I say, who knows if it's good for you. Perhaps if you win the lottery you will decline spiritually, or G-d forbid, perhaps you will have an accident if you will get your license. In any case, a person should try to accept the decree of Hashem with equanimity. This is why we recite a blessing "Just as one says a blessing for good hap, so he should say one for evil hap." (Berachot 48b), since in the difficulty that comes upon a person, there is certainly some good that he does not perceive. Thus it is good to thank Hashem even for difficulties.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Seeing the camel or seeing the women

And Isaac went forth to pray in the field towards evening, and he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were approaching. (Bereishit 24:63)

Rabbi Mordechai Druk, zt"l, the Yerushalmi Maggid once explained this in a sharp way:

If you wish to know what is the meaning of “Man sees what he is!” then listen to the following:

In the above pasuk it is stated that Yitzchak went forth to pray in the fields towards evening and from the distance Rivkah was riding on a camel and her maidservants were with her. “And he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were approaching.” Yitzchak, who was truly holy and exalted saw with his eyes “camels approaching,” and nothing more!

But let us skip for a moment to the parashah of Vayishlach. There it is stated that Yakov prepared a gift for Eisav in order to pacify the wicked man – goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, etc., and then at the end he placed the women and children. But what is written there? “And Eisav lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children”... Of the entire delegation of flocks of animals, he noticed only the women and children.

Do you know why? Because this defines who Eisav is. Eisav was corrupt to the core, so when he looked he saw from all the hundreds of animals only the “women” – because that is who he is!...

But Yitzchak, who himself was truly holy, only saw the “camels coming,” although Rivkah and her maidservants were riding on them. This teaches us that “A person sees what is in his core – what he wants to see!”...

Men of Faith

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

There was a constant turnover of the gabbaim who served the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan. So many people wanted to serve the tzaddik that they had to take turns. One shift left, and the next one entered.

There were two main reasons that Rabbi Chaim preferred this method: The first was that the tzaddik refused to have a Jew attend him for an extended period of time without paying him for his service in any way. Even when a wealthy person would attend him, Rabbi Chaim would make sure to give him something that he would appreciate in return.

The second reason was that the tzaddik feared that if he would become accustomed to a specific person assisting him, he might begin to slight his honor by viewing him as his servant. Therefore, he preferred to constantly change his attendants and gabbaim.

As expected, many people sought the honor of serving the tzaddik and personally observe his

praiseworthy conduct. They enjoyed basking in his impressive presence. There was a waiting list of months to gain the privilege of serving Rabbi Chaim.

We are told that anyone who served the tzaddik was blessed with great wealth. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu testifies to this and says, “I know many Jews who became rich in this merit, and even their children became very wealthy.”

It is told that once someone by the name of Ochana attended Rabbi Chaim for an extended time. One day, Rabbi Chaim called him and said, “That’s it! The time has come for you to quit.”

Rabbi Chaim gave him a modest sum of money at the conclusion of his services, emphatically blessing him, “Do not worry about your future. From this small amount, you will yet become wealthy...”

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu commented, “I heard from a trustworthy source that Mr. Ochana became very rich and also merited long life.”