

Chukat

June 23rd 2018
10th of Tamuz 5778

754

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

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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" a



Maskil LéDavid

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

The purpose of man is to sanctify Heaven

"Since you did not have faith in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly to the Land which I have given them." (Bamidbar 20:12)

Rashi explains: "to sanctify Me": For had you spoken to the rock and it had given forth [water], I would have been sanctified in the eyes of the congregation. They would have said, "If this rock, which neither speaks nor hears, and does not require sustenance, fulfills the word of the Omnipresent, how much more should we!

The main purpose of man in this world is to sanctify Hashem's Name through his good deeds and increase the honor of Heaven. If he does so in public, and Hashem's Name becomes glorified in the eyes of the people, he becomes unimaginably greater than if he would glorify Hashem's name in private. Chazal say regarding this (Sotah 10b), "Yosef who sanctified the Heavenly Name in private merited that one letter should be added to him from the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: He appointed it in Yosef for a testimony. Yehudah, however, who sanctified the heavenly Name in public merited that the whole of his name should be called after the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He." When a person engages in Torah and performs the mitzvot of Hashem with enthusiasm and love, Hashem's Name becomes glorified through him, since this is the main purpose of Torah and mitzvot. This is as Chazal state (Yalkut Va'etchanan 837), "The Torah was only given in order to glorify His Great Name." Also the Midrash brings (Tanchuma Vayigash 6): Hashem said to Yisrael, "Honor the mitzvot, since if you honor them, it is as if you honored Me."

Since this is the main purpose of man in the world, to increase the glory of Heaven and sanctify Hashem's Name, and Moshe and Aharon lessened the honor Hashem unintentionally by hitting the rock, as it is stated, "Since you did not have faith in Me to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel," therefore, they were punished with such harsh punishment that they did not merit to bring Bnei Yisrael to Eretz Yisrael.

Really, Hashem was dealing very meticulously with Moshe and Aharon, since Hashem deals strictly with those that are closest to him, to a hair's breath. There is no doubt that Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, dedicated himself all his life to zealously glorifying Hashem's great Name. He sacrificed

his life in order to magnify the exalted honor of Hashem in this world, and his entire aspiration was to increase the honor and reinforce the Kingdom of Hashem in the Universe. But in this case Moshe erred and hit the Rock, and thus he was considered having lessened, ever so minutely, the honor of Heaven in relation to his lofty level, and therefore, he was punished.

But the issue is still puzzling. Is it possible that Moshe and Aharon deserved such a harsh punishment only because of such a seemingly minor error of hitting the Rock instead of talking to it?

I would like to suggest with siyatta d'Shemaya, that aside from the Kiddush Hashem that was prevented by hitting the Rock, if Moshe and Aharon would have only spoken to the Rock, this would have transmitted a moral lesson to all generations. Regarding this the Midrash says (Yalkut Shimoni 20), "And speak to the Rock," He said to him – when a child is young, his Rebbe hits him to teach him a lesson, but when he grows up, he talks to him to stay in line. So said Hashem to Moshe: When the "Rock" was young, you struck it, as it is stated (Shemot 17:6), "And you shall strike the rock," but now "Speak to the Rock," and teach it by discussing Torah, and it will issue water from the Rock. These are the words of the Midrash.

In other words, Hashem wanted Bnei Yisrael to learn from this an important foundation in the matter of education for generations. When the children are still small, they can get hit a bit for the purpose of educating them. However, when they grow up, there is no point in hitting, but rather one must educate them by talking and discussing things pleasantly and patiently. Teaching one perek, or one halachah pleasantly and patiently will cause the young boy to want to draw closer to Torah, and then the result will be that he will draw forth waters of Torah, as in the waters of the Torah from the Rock within him.

This lesson is what Hashem wanted to teach Bnei Yisrael by speaking to the Rock instead of striking it. But when Moshe by mistake struck the rock, he defeated this purpose and prevented this lesson from being learned for all generations. Therefore, Hashem demonstrated anger toward Moshe and Aharon and punished them harshly.

May we always merit to raise and sanctify Hashem's Name through our deeds, and may His Honorable Name become exalted and be praised by the nations, Amen.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

10 – Rabbi David Chassin

11 – Rabbi Zvi Hersh of Zidichov

12 – Rabbi Yakov ba"r Asher The Ba'al Haturim

13 – Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, hy"d
Author of "Kovetz Shiurim"

14 – Rabbi Yakov Malul Rava"d of Vizan

15 – Rabbeinu Chaim ben Atar the "Dr Ha'chaim Ha'kadush

16 – Rabbi Shimon Diskin



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

Non-kosher Foods Block the Way Home

When I was in Argentina, a woman approached me and related her family issues. She complained that her children did not respect her fittingly. They never asked after her welfare and did not keep up a connection. This caused her untold anguish. She wanted me to bless her that her children should return to her as before. She brought along a photo of her family.

My eyes darkened as I saw a picture of people, which was taken outside a non-kosher eatery in Chile. I told the woman that her difficulties with her children were not their fault. It fed off the fact clearly depicted in the picture. She took a look at it, but could find nothing wrong.

“A person perceives himself and his family subjectively,” I told her. “Therefore, you cannot judge yourself and your children properly and see what the problem is. This picture testifies to the fact that your family ate a non-kosher meal.”

“But what does that have to do with my children severing ties with me?” she wondered.

“Regarding forbidden foods, our holy Torah states (Vayikra 11:43), ‘Do not make yourselves abominable by means of any swarming thing; do not defile yourselves through them.’ Impure foods stuff up one’s heart and soul. His head becomes blocked, to the extent that he cannot see beyond his own ego. This is why your children ignore you. The remedy for this situation is to be strict regarding the matter of kashrut.

“Only kosher food can unclog their hearts. B’eizat Hashem, they will yet return.”

A simple Jew

It is an iron clad rule in the Torah: Hashem created the laws and we are not permitted to doubt them. When a Jew lives with the simple belief that: “I do not understand everything – but Hashem knows everything.” This belief is the cause for his salvation.

The saintly Rabbi Henich of Alexander, zt”l related:

There was a story that took place many years ago, concerning a bishop who hated Jews and wielded a lot of power in his city. The bishop decreed that the Jews should choose one representative to challenge him in a public debate. If he would win the debate, then he would be allowed to do with the Jews as he pleases and issue harsh decrees against them. On the other hand, if the Jew would defeat him in the debate, then he would be the guilty party and the Jews could do with him as they pleased. He was so sure of his wisdom and conclusive knowledge.

The Jews called for a fast and lamentations, and they did not know whom to send to the debate. A simple villager declared: I will go and win. They said to him: How can an ignoramus like you win the learned bishop? The simple Jew said to them: I am willing to take him on!

Since they had no other volunteer, the people agreed, and indeed the simple villager came to the debate.

The bishop prepared a large stage and had important army ministers and rulers join in order to gain greater prominence when he would defeat the Jews. Also thousands of local residents came there to see the great debate. And then, our simple villager arrived and walked swiftly over to the bishop and asked him:

What is the meaning of the words “Eini yode’ah” (I don’t know).

The bishop answered on the spot: “I don’t know!”

When the people around him heard him publicly announced that he does not know, they immediately pushed him off the stage and killed him. They did not understand what the simple Jew had asked him, so they thought that the villager had won the debate.

The Jews rejoiced over their great salvation and wondered how the simple Jew had thought of such a brilliant way to defeat the learned bishop.

The villager said to them: I saw in a Chumash with translation that it states “eini yode’ah – I don’t know.” It occurred to me that if even the Chumash of translation does not know what it means, then certainly the bishop will not know either...

So we see, Rabbi Henich concluded, that from “I don’t know,” Jewish people can merit great salvation.

So too, the Red Heifer is a subject which “eini yode’ah,” and is shrouded in secret. Therefore, through it, Bnei Yisrael can attain great salvation.

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

He should be praised

If one wants to praise a person who is known to be righteous and exalted, and has no bad qualities, then he can be praised also in front of his adversaries! This is because they will not be able to disparage him, and if they do, it will be clear to everyone that it is nonsense.



Chazak U'Baruch

The root of man's success, writes the gaon Rabbi Michal Yehudah Lefkowitz, zt"l, in his sefer "Imrei Da'at" (page 251), is dependent upon the matter of guarding his eyes, which is the cause of a person's success both in spiritual and physical matters. These are his words: "We are obligated to learn from all the events of the times and from all the tribulations of the general public and of families and individuals, which although the ways of Hashem are hidden from us, but we can attribute many of them to the lack of sufficient sanctity and purity, because guarding one's eyes and the purity of thought is the first thing that determines a person's success, and it is also the final factor that leads to the ultimate Kedushah, whereby one achieves Ruach Hakodesh."

If we seek to understand the power behind one's sight, we can find several sources in the Torah and in Chazal discussing the outcome of correct use of the eyes, or their improper use. From this we can learn and understand the lofty matter of seeing.

In parashat Noach, we learn about the deed of Shem and Yefet, who walked backwards to cover their father's nakedness so as not to see what was not needed. The Torah tells about the blessings that they merited for this act, and also the curse that Cham was cursed with, that he should be a slave to his brothers. The Midrash Tanchuma explains that Cham's features became distorted: "Since Cham gazed at his father's nakedness, his eyes became red, and his lips grew strange, and his hair and beard became black," as we see to this day that all of Cham's descendants have a strange appearance. This is actually the outcome of an improper sight; because of one improper gaze, Cham was punished for all generations, until the present day.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the harmful outcome of a sight is not necessarily only when one looks at something defiled, but also sometimes because of gazing at something holy, which is above the level of the person, and he is immediately punished for it. Thus, if someone gazes at something which is above his spiritual level, he is held guilty, because his physical structure cannot contain this kedushah, and he is not allowed to look there.

It is brought regarding Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, that when he saw the bush burning with fire but not getting consumed, he realized that this was a G-dly vision, and he immediately averted his eyes from beholding it, "Because he was afraid to look toward G-d" (Shemot 3:6). Moshe Rabbeinu understood that this vision was exalted and highly Kadosh, so he did not allow his physical eyes to behold this G-dly Kedushah.

Sometimes, seeing and contemplating holy objects can draw upon a person spiritual blessing and extraordinary loftiness, which can bring him to saintliness and purity of the soul. This is true of gazing at the countenance of a righteous person, as Chazal say, "your eyes shall behold your Teacher," and likewise by looking at the cloak of the sefer Torah when it is taken out to be read, as Rabbeinu Rabbi Chaim Vital, zya"l, writes in "Sha'arei Kavanot" (Drush 1 concerning the issue of the reading of the Sefer Torah), that Rabbeinu the Arizal would gaze at the actual letters of the Sefer Torah, and he would say that through gazing closely at the words so that a person could actually read them well, he draws upon himself a brilliant spiritual light.

Treasures

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



Starting the day right

"MiReishit arisotechem titnu l'Hashem terumah – From the first portion of your dough you shall give a gift to the L-rd" (Bamidbar 15:21)

The word "arisa – dough" also means bed, on which a person sleeps. The Torah warns a person that when he wakes up and gets out of bed, the first (reishit) thing he should do is "you shall give a gift to the L-rd." The word "terumah – gift" is a derivative of the word "hitromemut – elevation," since a person must rise immediately in the morning with alacrity to serve Hashem.

One's first action in the morning should be a terumah – gift to Hashem, by engaging in heavenly acts, such as preparing for prayer, as it is stated (Amos 4:12), "Prepare yourself to meet your G-d, O Israel" In this way he will acquire fear of Heaven, because everything depends on "b'reishit – the beginning." And if the beginning is correct, the continuation will follow in the right way.

We can also explain "From the first portion of your dough you shall give a gift to the L-rd" in a different way. "Arisotechem – your dough" refers to a young child who is still in the cradle (arisa). Already from his cradle he should give a gift to the L-rd. This is accomplished by guiding him in the ways of the Torah and mitzvot. One should not wait until the child grows up to train him, as it is stated (Mishlei 22:6), "Train a child according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it," because everything is dependent on the primary education. If when he is young and in the cradle, all the way in the beginning, he will be educated in Torah and sanctity, then also when he will grow up, he will continue in this exalted way.

It is a sacred obligation to adopt this lofty path. Already when one begins to learn Gemara, he must be aware that everything depends upon how he inherently relates to learning. If he began with zeal and enthusiasm, engaging wholeheartedly in his Gemara, and not entertaining interests in anything else, then he is assured to ascend on the path that leads to greatness. However, if every small disturbance distracts him from studying, and already in the beginning of his studies, he is uninspired, and interrupts his studies for trivial matters, then certainly his Torah study is shattered into shards, and he will not succeed in this way of becoming elevated.

Therefore, we must all strengthen ourselves in the study of Torah, especially in the beginning of our studies, so that the beginning of the learning session should be with zeal and enthusiasm. Then, we are assured that with siyata d'Shemaya the continuation will be in this way as well. May it be His will that we merit advancing higher and higher in the study of Torah and in the fear of Heaven, Amen.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Beloved by all

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

From this pasuk, Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein explains in the name of Rabbi Yaron Halbertal, we can prove that in the Wilderness there was not even one instance of an accidental murder.

If a man would have murdered his fellow accidentally in the Wilderness, he would have had to flee to the Cities of Refuge and remain there until the Kohen Gadol dies. Without doubt, when the Kohen Gadol died, that man would have danced from joy at being freed from his confinement in the City of Refuge.

However, when Aharon died, no one rejoiced, as it is stated:

“The entire house wept for Aharon.” This proves that during that entire period there was no accidental murder, because, upon Aharon the Kohen Gadol’s death, the murderer would have rejoiced over his release.



Men of Faith

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

Take the Soup Away

There is an amazing story told by Rabbi Moshe Benisti, the principal of a school in Nice, France, which he had heard from his mother, Mrs. Chanina, tichyeh, and related to Moreinu v’Rabbeinu.

Once, the Rabbanit went to the butcher to buy meat, as usual, in order to prepare the meal for the night of Shabbat Kodesh. That day, the butcher deviated from his regular habit and gave her meat which was kosher but not chalak (glatt), as she generally bought each week.

The Rabbanit, who was not aware of the change, brought the meat home and prepared the soup and meatballs for the Rav as usual in honor of Shabbat, to revive the tzaddik’s spirit after fasting the whole week. When the Rabbanit placed the plate of soup on the table, Rabbi Chaim suddenly called to her, “Take the soup away! It is prohibited to eat it; it contains worms...”

The Rabbanit glanced at the soup and saw that it was clear, with no worms. She innocently assumed that the Rav did not like her soup and just mentioned the worms as a joke. The Rabbanit went to the kitchen and brought her husband the second course, the meatballs.

The Rav again called out to her, declaring that there were worms crawling in his plate. “Do you want to feed me food that is prohibited? The Torah

states that whoever eats worms transgresses five prohibitions. Why then did you serve me meatballs with live worms crawling in them?”

Rabbi Chaim took the whole pot of soup with the meatballs and threw it in the garbage. Consequently, after a week of fasting, he ate only bread and water for his meal, without tasting the meat at all.

Immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbat, the Rabbanit hurried to the butcher and inquired about the meat that she had bought from him. Where did it come from, and who was the shochet?

The butcher explained that the shochet was a G-d fearing Jew; however the meat that she had bought that week had not been chalak, as she usually bought. It was considered just kosher, since there was a question of sircha concerning the animal’s lungs, which rendered it kosher, but not chalak.

Then, the Rabbanit understood that Hashem had prevented her husband from eating meat whose kashrut was questionable. This story illustrates the importance of Sefardim adhering to the ruling of Maran Beit Yosef, zy”a, to only eat meat which is chalak. Furthermore, we see that when a person guards himself from eating prohibited foods, Hashem protects him from stumbling unintentionally, as it says, “He guards the steps of his devout ones.”