

Pinchas

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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" a



Maskil LéDavid

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

The destruction of the Beit Hamikdash

The story that took place in Yerushalayim is well-known, about which Chazal say "Because of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza Yerushalayim was destroyed" (Gittin 55b), since the enemy who was called Bar Kamtza was thrown out of the feast, and he went to the emperor and said to him "The Jews have rebelled against you," and this is the proof: If you will send an offering to the Beit Hamikdash, the Jews will not sacrifice it.

We need to clarify how it is possible that Torah scholars who participated in the feast remained silent and did not react at all when Bar Kamtza was humiliated in public, even though he offered to pay for the entire feast from his own money. This signified that they were afflicted with baseless hatred, even for people who were in a humiliating situation. Is this possible? How could they not react at all upon witnessing a person suffering terribly by being shamed in public?

And if you would say that they pretended not to see what was happening, it is much more serious, since then they are guilty of something worse; that they closed their eyes to the injustice and refused to protest it, demonstrating hypocrisy and wickedness all for "the sake of Heaven;" how could they not heed what the Torah says (Vaykira 19:16), "You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood?"

We can explain it in an enlightening way. There are two types of tzaddikim in the world: there are tzaddikim whose whole purpose and desire is only to fulfill the will of their Creator, regardless of their own personal interests. We find that Chazal relate (Chulin 7a): "Once, R. Pinchas ben Yair was on his way to redeem captives, and came to the river Ginnai. 'O Ginnai', said he, 'divide your waters for me, that I may pass through you'. It replied. You are about to do the will of your Maker; I, too, am doing the will of my Maker. You may or may not accomplish your purpose; I am sure of accomplishing mine'. He said: 'If you will not divide yourself, I will decree that no waters ever pass through you'. It, thereupon, divided itself for him."

This illustrates how true tzaddikim always seek to fulfill the will of their Father in Heaven regardless of their personal interests, and not considering their own pleasure. For this purpose, they are also willing to sacrifice their lives

in order to sanctify Hashem's Name, without fearing people.

On the other hand, there are "tzaddikim," whose whole purpose is to do the will of others, implying that these "tzaddikim" are only pretending to be righteous, but their real intentions are selfish, and they wish to find favor in people's eyes, even if those people are not righteous.

Thus we can understand what transpired by the feast. At the time of the Beit Hamikdash there were such tzaddikim and Torah scholars, whose entire purpose was to perform the will of others, and they had only selfish interests in mind. Although they engaged in Torah, when it came to admonishing people, they simply fell silent because they wanted to please others. These were the scholars who participated in the feast, and did not admonish the host when he humiliated Bar Kamtza, because they wanted to please the host.

If so, we need to clarify why the silence of the scholars, who did not admonish the host, was interpreted by Bar Kamtza as if they agreed with the host's conduct. Then as a result, Kamtza set out to slander the Jews before the Emperor and consequently brought about the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. Did he not consider that the silence of the scholars was only in order to find favor in the eyes of the host?

I would like to suggest the following: We know that Torah scholars are meant to be a source of inspiration and positive influence on their surroundings, and also to serve as the authority and role model for exalted behavior. If those scholars who participated in the feast would have been a positive influence on the people, then their behavior would have reflected this, especially when they were all seated together. But here we see a completely opposite thing in the presence of all the scholars, how a person can humiliate his fellow in public, without anyone protesting it. Moreover, the scholars themselves were present and did not protest at all the terrible disgrace, which means that this person had no proper role model. Why? Because even the scholars did not behave in a better manner, since they sat there and did not protest at all what they witnessed, which means that they were comfortable with it. Therefore, Bar Kamtza set out to slander them before the Emperor and caused the destruction of the Temple.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

24 - Rabbi Camus Pelah Rava" d of Tripoli

25 - Rabbi Aryeh Leib Author or "Sha'agat Aryeh

26 - Rabbi Aharon Berachya of Modina Author of "Ma'avar Yabok"

27 - Rabbi Elazar Abuchatzera

28 - Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

29 - Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki Rashi Hakadosh

1 Av - Aharon HaKohen

Walking in their Ways

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

The privilege of preparing for Shabbat

Regarding preparations for the Shabbat, it is important to mention that the assistance and participation in the preparations for Shabbat applies to all members of the household, and even the head of the house should take part in it. Of course, usually it's the woman who takes the main responsibility in this endeavor, but we must be aware that even a Torah scholar, who is occupied by the study of Torah, is also obligated to take part and assist in preparing something for the Shabbat.

We find in the Gemara (Shabbat 119a) that the saintly Amora'im would participate in the preparations for Shabbat. R' Chisda would cut up the beetroots; Rabah and R' Yossef chopped wood; R' Zera kindled the fire; R' Nachman brought "in and out," bringing in the vessels necessary for Shabbat and putting away the weekday vessels. From them everyone should learn how to behave, and people should not assume that performing chores in effort to prepare for Shabbat diminishes his honor. On the contrary, honoring the Shabbat makes him more honorable. (It is his honor to honor the Shabbat.)

I remember way back then how my father and teacher, our crowning glory, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya"l, who even in his old age would strain himself in preparations of the Shabbat. It was his custom to personally wash his clothes in honor of the Shabbat, and he would put each item away in its place after washing them. He also used to boil the water urn so that it should be ready in honor of the Shabbat, among other things that

he would perform joyfully in honor of the Shabbat.

With G-d's help, I too continue with this sacred custom, and every Friday I try to help in the preparations for the holy Shabbat by cleaning and tidying the kitchen. I feel an otherworldly pleasure in this preparation, and the author of the "Machazik Brochah" wrote (in the name of the sefer Kavanot HaYashan), that the perspiration that a person sweats while preparing for the Shabbat, Hashem uses to swipe clean all the sins, just like the segulah of tears which can eliminate one's sins.

This help and assistance at home is very necessary on Friday, since as we know, the Satan is active at that time trying with all its might to cause quarrels and fights between the members of the house. As the Gaon, the Chida writes (Moreh B'Etzba" 7) "Noon time on erev Shabbat is a dangerous time for disputes between man and his wife. The sitra achra works hard to provoke a quarrel. A G-d-fearing person will subjugate his evil inclination so that no dispute erupts, and moreover, he will seek peace."

Certainly, if the husband helps and assists his wife, and he also works hard together with her for the Shabbat preparations, aside from the great kindness he demonstrates, his good deeds also promote peace between him and his wife, and consequently the Shechinah resides between them, and his reward is enormous from Hashem. Fortunate is the person who possesses this valuable virtue.

May the merit of Shabbat Kodesh stand by us to redeem us shortly in the everlasting Redemption, as Chazal state (Vayikra Rabbah 3:1), Yisrael is only redeemed in the merit of Shabbat.



Words of our Sages

Guided Imagery

"So that the congregation of the L-rd will not be like sheep without a shepherd" (Bamidbar 27:17)

When Moshe was discussing his successor with Hashem and he said, "Appoint a man over the congregation," he presented his request in the metaphor of animals, "So that the congregation of the L-rd will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

We may wonder, why did Moshe need to illustrate to Hashem such a metaphor. Does Hashem need metaphors and illustrations?

A wonderful explanation is presented by the Mashgiach Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian, zt"l:

Since Moshe Rabbeinu stood in prayer and supplication before Hashem, Moshe Rabbeinu used an example he could relate to, so that his prayers should truly stem from the depth of his heart.

The Mashgiach, Rabbi Dan Segal, shlita, said that once during the period when the Rabbi of Ponevezh, zt"l, got sick and was hospitalized, the Mashgiach, Rabbi Yechezkel Levinstein, zt"l, urged all the staff of the yeshiva that it was the duty of every member of the yeshiva to plead in prayer for him to be cured, and this was especially important because they owed him a tremendous debt of gratitude. Among other things he told them, "I will tell you how to pray from the depths of your heart: Imagine that you are in the hospital and watching Rabbeinu suffer terribly, and you hear the doctors talking about how critical his condition is and how he needs a tremendous salvation, then your prayers will be completely different."

During the war in Eretz Yisrael in the year 1967, the Mashgiach demanded in his many speeches and lectures in the yeshiva of Ponevezh, that they should bear in the burden of so many Jewish people who were traversing dangerous territory in a state of war with fear and seeing death before their eyes, and their families were worried. He emphasized that they were not only obligated because of one's duty in sharing his fellow's yoke, but by virtue of the commandment, "Love your fellow as yourself," because for this alone one must truly be concerned and worried.

The Mashgiach achieved this lofty level just from picturing a real picture in his mind. It is told that when the remote control came into use and the device that by the push of a button a person could open and lock his vehicle, it once happened when he left the yeshiva and drove home in the car of one of the yeshiva students, he saw that he opened the door of his car with the remote control, and he marveled at it saying, when one sees that such a thing is possible, it is easier to understand the concept of transmitting positive and negative effects from afar, and one does not have to tangibly deal with something in order to effect a change.

Similarly, when people starting using "headsets," which are the special headphones to be able to talk without holding the receiver in your hand, and people began talking in the street without fearing that people would accuse them of talking to themselves, the Mashgiach declared: Now there are no excuses! Once when we were taught to utilize every moment and review Mishnayot even when walking in the street, there were those who argued that they were embarrassed to be talking while walking in the streets, because maybe someone would see them talking to themselves. But now we see that people are not embarrassed to do so. When they are busy and involved in their business, they do not worry that people will think that they are talking to themselves. Certainly for the sake of spiritual gains such as studying Torah it is worthwhile.

The Haftarah

"The words of Yirmeyahu" (Yirmeyahu 1)

The connection to the parashah: In the haftarah, Yirmeyahu predicts the churban of Yerushalayim. This is the first of the three haftarot read on the three Shabbatot preceding Tisha B'Av.



Guard Your Tongue

The benefactor

We also have to learn from the fact that one may not praise his fellow publicly, that if a person received a loan from his friend, he should not publicize his friend's tremendous benevolence. Because as a result many dishonest people will flock to him, and he will not be able to escape them. A person must guard his mouth and tongue well.



Chazak U'Baruch

In the olden days, the grief over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash was palpable and close to every Jew's heart, so everyone was well aware of the significance of mourning during the Three Weeks prior to Tisha b'Av. The atmosphere in the streets of the city during the Three Weeks, and especially on Tisha b'Av, was shrouded in gloom and sorrow. The feeling of mourning permeated the days of all the people, from young boys to old men, women and children.

In our generation, the generation in the Footsteps of Mashiach, the signs of mourning and grief of the Shechinah are pushed aside, when the troubles of the general public, and the individual, envelop us and pain us, as our Sages, z"l, note, "Recent troubles cause the previous ones to be forgotten." Nevertheless, the hope and anticipation for Redemption must be foremost on our minds.

The Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef once listened to the conversation of students dealing with the politics about voting for ministers and governors. He rebuked them:

Whoever talks about these matters, it is as if he is not anticipating the coming of Mashiach, G-d forbid. A person has to anticipate every moment that he will come, and when the Mashiach comes, all the governments will be abolished. So why should we engage in issues of ministers and governors when in one moment they will all be abolished?

He also added: "This resembles a person who orders a taxi and waits on the street, anticipating the taxi's arrival, expectantly waiting for the taxi to arrive, because any moment it may come. So too, we must anticipate the coming of Mashiach constantly, because any moment he may arrive!"

The author of the Pele Yoetz, Rabbi Eliezer Papo, zt"l, writes illuminating words regarding the feeling of sorrow and mourning over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. He says the following:

"It is fitting to mourn and grief the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, which was destroyed as a result of our sins, not because we are in a painful exile and drifting, but because of the tremendous sorrow in Heaven, since it is very great..."

This can be compared to a son who loves his father, and he caused him to be terribly angry at him until he was forced to leave him. If the son is truly fond and faithful to his father, he is not afraid of his blows, but of his father's anger and sorrow."

In fact, in previous generations, it was a common sight to see ordinary Jews, together with great scholars, lamenting during the Three Weeks the grief of the Shechinah and the Destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. The gaon Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian, zt"l, relates that in his youth, when he was a young child, during the Three Weeks he once entered the Beit Haknesset at two o'clock in the afternoon and found the Beit Haknesset full of people sitting on the ground and conducting the Tikun Chatzot. Who were these people? They were shoemakers, tailors, and carpenters, since ordinary people knew that one must conduct the Tikun Chatzot and cry over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash during the Three Weeks prior to Tisha b'Av.

Treasures

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



Pinchas acted for the sake of Heaven

"Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon the Kohen has turned My anger away from the children of Israel" (Bamidbar 25:11)

Chazal say (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2) that everything Pinchas did was only for the sake of Heaven, and he sacrificed his life for the honor of Hashem and the sanctity of the Camp of Israel.

We may really wonder, since at that event also Moshe Rabbeinu was present, as well as Aharon the Kohen and the seventy Elders, and moreover, Chazal say (Yerushalmi Gittin 1:2), "One may not decide a law in front of his teacher." If so, how did Pinchas decide to kill a leader of the Tribe on his own initiative?!

Moreover, Chazal say regarding Pinchas (Sanhedrin 82a), "He saw what was happening and remembered the halachah." So then why didn't Pinchas mention this halachah to Moshe himself? Then he may have received permission from Moshe Rabbeinu to kill the sinner, and he wouldn't have entered the category of one who "decides a law before his teacher," deserving capital punishment.

We may explain this according to what Chazal say: "He saw what was happening and remembered the halachah," implying that Pinchas saw the deed of Adam Harishon, and remembered the halachah. He remembered that Hashem told Adam Harishon (Bereishit 2:17) not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. In fact, Adam thought that he should eat from it, because he was clever and he knew that if he ate from the Tree of Knowledge then as a result he would be able to serve Hashem on a higher level and more intensely.

In other words, Adam Harishon was affected by a feeling of loftiness stemming from a foreign source, one which Hashem did not command him, and therefore he sinned. Instead of considering Hashem and His commandment, he thought only about himself and how to heighten his own dignity, so that it would be justified to transgress Hashem's commandment.

All this was due to the fact that Adam Harishon did not possess merits of righteous ancestors. He was the handiwork of Hashem and thought that he could do whatever he pleased, and therefore he ultimately sinned. We learn from here the virtue of possessing merits of righteous ancestors. Adam Harishon did not have such merits to protect him, whereas Pinchas possessed the merits of his forefathers. For this reason the Torah recounts his lineage stemming from Aharon the Kohen. It is specifically this merit which assisted him most to face his challenge successfully.

When Pinchas sensed the great danger hovering over the Jews because of the sin of the nasi of the tribe of Shimon, he did not have an extra moment to consult with Moshe Rabbeinu to hear his halachic ruling. If he would have turned to Moshe to consult him about the halachah, meanwhile thousands of Jews would have died. Therefore, he decided the law on his own, at great risk to his life, and even at the expense of his portion in the World to Come, only in order to save Bnei Yisrael and avenge the honor of Hashem, which had been desecrated.

This is why Pinchas rose immediately and took a spear in his hand and went to kill the sinners, in order to stop the fatal plague. For this Pinchas received an enormous reward of long life, and from that time he merited the crown of a Kohen (as described in Zevachim 101a), and he received the exceptional blessing, "I hereby give him My covenant of peace."

Thus, Hashem gave Pinchas his tremendous reward. What was his reward? "I hereby give him My covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants after him [as] an eternal covenant of kehunah," because all his actions were for the sake of Heaven.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



It is written, “And the Almighty spoke to Moshe saying: Pinchas the son of Eliezer, the son of Aharon the priest has turned away my anger from the Children of Israel in that he was zealous for My sake among them, so that I did not consume the Children of Israel in My jealousy” (Numbers 24:10-11).

Why does the Torah add the words “among them” which are seemingly extra words?

The commentator Alshich explains that the seemingly extra words “among them” are to focus us on the fact that Pinchas’ zealous action was not very popular among the people; there were those who were ready to kill him for his zealousness! Nevertheless, Pinchas was ready to sacrifice everything to do the will of the Almighty. He took action even though many people disapproved of what he did.

There are many instances in life in which the correct thing to do is not always the most popular. For example, if a group of people are speaking loshon hora (gossip) against others, they usually do not appreciate someone’s telling them to stop talking negatively. However, a person whose focus is on doing the will of the Almighty will not be deterred even if others will insult him for his behavior.



Men of Faith

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

The miracle

Rabbi David Cohen related that because of a plumbing problem his house, he brought a plumber, whose name is Shlomo Abisor, to fix the problem, and he was about fifty years old at the time. Suddenly, the plumber’s eyes fell upon a charity box with a picture of the righteous Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya”a. He stopped his work and approached the owner of the house and told him, “Sit down and I will tell you about a miracle that happened to me in the merit of the tzaddik, and how I owe my life to him.

This was his story:

About fifty years ago, when my mother was expecting me, she tripped and fell on her stomach with a hard thud. After going for many tests, the doctors discovered that the fetus had been hurt and determined that at birth the child would suffer from serious stomach problems because of this fall.

And so it was, from the time that I was born, I suffered from severe pains in my stomach. Every day my parents would run to the hospital with me to relieve the pain, and they tied a black belt around my stomach permanently. They tried various kinds of medicines, and once I almost got a terrible burn

from the hot water that they placed on my stomach improperly.

My grandmother, a”h came to my mother and told her, “You should know, that if you are interested in curing your son, then go to the tzaddik Rabbeinu Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya”a, who lives near us, and ask him for his advice.”

Indeed, with their simple faith in tzaddikim, my parents turned to Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya”a, and asked for his advice and blessing. However, to their great astonishment, he told them, “I do not see any child”...

My parents exclaimed in wonder: “How could it be? Our son is truly alive and lying in the hospital at the moment!”

The tzaddik thought for a moment and asked them, “Did you circumcise him?”

When my parents answered in the negative that the child still hadn’t entered into the covenant of the Brit of Avraham Avinu, a”h, because of his illness, the tzaddik told them: “So this is the reason why I do not see him.”

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya”a, took a saucer and probably wrote mystic combinations, and then he poured some olive oil over it and erased the

words in the saucer. He told the mother: “Take the saucer with the oil and place it on the stomach of the infant. If he will live until the morning, then circumcise him immediately and do not be afraid of what the doctors say. At the circumcision you should name him Shlomo, after the tzaddik Rabbeinu Shlomo Bel-Hench of Morocco (he was called this way because a big miracle occurred to him concerning a “nachash – snake).

And so it really was. My parents put the saucer on my stomach, and in the morning they immediately circumcised me and called me Shlomo after the tzaddik Shlomo, and from then on all my pains passed and I became a new person.

The plumber turned to Rabbi David Cohen and told him: So I am this child Shlomo standing before you. The miracle happened to me, and thank G-d, I am well and healthy. This is the great power of tzaddikim.”

From this story, Rabbi David Chanan-ya Pinto, shlit”a, declared, I learned for the first time that my esteemed father, a”h, used mystic combinations, and this story spread for many years throughout the hospital, thus sanctifying the Name of Hashem in public.