

Chayei Sarah

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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a

Maskil LéDavid

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

The Significance of Kindness

"Rather, to my land and to my kindred shall you go and take a wife for my son for Yitzchak"
(Bereishit 24:4)

The Ran (Drashot HaRan), asks: "Why did Avraham make Eliezer swear that he will only take a wife for Yitzchak from Avraham's birthplace and not from the daughters of the Canaanites? It could not have been based on their idol worship because Avraham's family in Charan worshiped idols, as well.

Avraham knew that the people of Charan possessed the attribute of kindness. One who has this quality, even if his intellect is faulty, will eventually mend his ways and become great.

Cana'an was home to Sdom and Amorah, the towns where kindness and charity were considered as thorns in their eyes. According to their custom, one who requested or gave charity was immediately killed. The king of Sdom himself is an example of this conduct. "Give me the people and take the possessions for yourself" (Bereishit 14:21). He requested that Avraham Avinu return all the people to him so that he will continue to have control over them and be able to assert his authority as a dictator. Ephron the Chittite also displayed this value system. Chazal (Baba Metzia 87a) explain why Ephron's name is written without a 'vov' (וּפְרוֹן). It alludes to his conduct of "many words but few deeds". At first, he told Avraham, "Four hundred silver shekels; between me and you - what is it?" Rashi explains that "between me and you" means - "for both of us, for we are friends". When did this friendship transpire that they could be considered friends? The wickedness of Ephron was that he called Avraham a friend solely to get money out of him. He did not think about Avraham whose dead was laying before him, but debated the sum in a shameful way, and only in the end when he reached an agreement of an exorbitant amount, did he allow Avraham to bury Sarah.

On the other hand, in Charan, even though the people were wicked, they possessed the trait of kindness. We are told about Lavan (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishit, r' 109), that when he heard that Eliezer had arrived in Charan and he saw the jewelry that his sister Rivkah received, he coveted Eliezer's wealth and ran out to meet him with the intention of killing him. When Eliezer saw Lavan approaching with his sword, he uttered the name of Hashem and flew into the air together with his ten camels. When Lavan saw that he wouldn't be able to overcome him, he immediately said, "Come, O blessed of Hashem! Why should you stand outside when I have cleared the house, and place for the camels?" (Bereishit 24:32). Rashi explains that "I have cleared the house" means that he rid his house of avodah zarah. Why did he do this? He no doubt wished to host Eliezer in his house and knew that he wouldn't agree to step into a home where there were idols.

Therefore, Avraham warned Eliezer to search for a wife especially in Charan, for they possessed the important trait of kindness. And indeed, Eliezer was led to Rivkah who was extremely righteous. Even though she

lived among wicked people she did not learn from their ways. A proof of her righteousness is that when she arrived in Be'er Sheva and saw Yitzchak from a distance, she fell on her face, for she perceived the Shechinah resting on him. The Rama of Pano writes that after the Akeidah, the angels took Yitzchak and learnt Torah with him for three years, and because of this he merited the Shechinah's presence.

Rivkah was accompanied by her maids yet they didn't fall to the ground. Similarly, all the young woman of Be'er Sheva were used to seeing Yitzchak but did not have this awe for him, for they did not merit to perceive the Shechinah that rested on him. It was only the tzadket Rivka who was deserving of this merit.

What caused Rivkah to become so righteous? Her outstanding trait of kindness. This is what Eliezer noticed, how a three-year-old girl offered to give Eliezer and all his camels to drink, and with her limited strength drew water again and again until the camels were satiated. I have calculated that for each camel she drew at least one hundred liters since this is the amount of water that a camel drinks. There were ten camels, so it works out that she drew an extremely large amount of water, besides what she drew for Eliezer and his servants. Her ingrained trait of kindness gave her the strength to draw this enormous amount of water. In the merit of her chessed, as soon as she arrived at Yitzchak's tent, the blessings that were present when Sarah Imeinu was alive, immediately returned; her dough and her candles were blessed and a cloud was present above the tent (Bereishit Rabba s' 16).

Avraham Avinu teaches us about the prominence of the trait of kindness. On the third day after his brit milah he was in great pain. Hashem came to visit him yet despite Hashem's presence, when Avraham noticed the three Arabs standing at the entrance to his tent, he forgot his pains and ran to greet them.

Throughout the day Hashem observed the chessed that Avraham performed with his guests, all in order to bring them closer to the Shechinah. This incident teaches us that hachnasat orchim takes precedence over receiving the Shechinah. Avraham Avinu learnt about the supremacy of kindness from Hashem himself. Avraham was the epitome of humility, as he said about himself, "Although I am but dust and ash" (Bereishit 18:27). Nevertheless, Hashem came to visit him to perform chessed and take away one sixtieth of his pains.

In the Gemara (Rosh Hashana 17a) we are told about one of the Amora'im who became ill and although everyone thought he would die, he survived. Later he told over that Hashem prevented the Angel of Death from taking his neshama by telling him that since the Amora is not particular about his kavod and also performs acts of kindness, he would merit living many more years even though his time had come to depart from this world. Concerning this attribute, we are told (Rosh Hashana ibid), "One who overlooks his honor is forgiven for all his sins".



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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

- 25 - Rabbi David Cohen Lamjerbi
- 26 - Rabbi Shalom Lopas, Rav of Acco
- 27 - Rabbi Moshe Natan Neta Tzenvirth
- 28 - Rabbeinu Yona of Girondi, author of 'Sha'arei Teshuva'
- 29 - Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Riminov
- 1 - Rabbi Ephraim Anakaveh
- 2 - Rabbi Ahron Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood



Walking in their Ways

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

The Picture of Faith

My student, Refael Amar, related the following amazing story. It taught me how far trust in the Sages can reach.

I once had occasion to travel to Morocco with my business partner, who is a pilot in the Israeli Air Force. He had just recently begun embracing Judaism. I suggested that we visit the burial site of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a. My friend agreed and we traveled to the cemetery in Essaouira.

The Arabic guard at the cemetery handed us a Sefer Tehillim and led us to the grave. My friend noticed the guard holding a piece of paper. His curiosity aroused, he turned to the guard, and asked him, in English, what he was holding. The guard replied, "I carry a picture of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, which I once received from his grandson."

My friend turned to me, and, speaking lashon hakodesh so that the Arab wouldn't understand, said, "Let's try to buy the picture off him. We'll offer him a huge sum. He'll surely agree to sell it to us."

The pilot offered him a nice amount of money, but the guard would not sell it to him for any price.

No matter how much he was offered, the guard stubbornly refused to part with this picture. The pilot finally offered four thousand dollars. This was enough to purchase a home in Morocco, but the guard stood his ground and refused to hear of selling the picture.

Finally, in defeat, my pilot friend turned to me, and said, "See how much faith this gentile has in the tzaddik. This faith surely runs deep in his blood, from generations bygone. Although the picture he holds is old and worn, he adamantly refuses to part with it."

There is no doubt that the simple faith of this Arab in the tzaddik was implanted within him due to miracles he witnessed in his merit. Therefore, this picture is worth everything to him.

If this guard, a simple gentile, could reach such a great level of faith in the power of the tzaddik, foregoing tremendous sums of money merely to keep his photograph, all the more so should we believe with perfect faith in the power of the tzaddikim and their merits.

The Haftarah

"King David was old, advanced in years" (Melachim I 1:1)

The connection to the Parsha: In the haftarah it says "King David was old, advanced in years" and in the Parsha we are told something very similar about Avraham Avinu a" h: "Avraham was old, well on in years". In the haftarah it also mentions that before his death David Hamelech gave over the kingship to his son, Shlomo and in this Parsha we are told that Avraham gave his son Yitzchak all that he possessed.



Guard Your Tongue

Rechilut in Writing

Regarding rechilut (gossip) there is no difference whether a person tells another outright what so-and-so said about him or did to him, or whether he gives over the information in the form of a letter. Both are considered rechilut. Similarly, whether he says that so-and-so said something negative about the person or about his wares, it is rechilut. Both sow seeds of hatred in the person's heart against the one who spoke.



Words of our Sages

Important Shidduch Information

"Take a wife for my son for Yitzchak" (Bereishit 24:4)

The sefer 'Mishmar HaLevi' tells about a Yerushalmi Jew who came to Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky zt" l and asked to speak to him for a few minutes, for he wishes to inquire about a bachur from Ponivezh yeshiva who was suggested for his daughter.

He started to ask the Rosh Yeshiva a number of questions about the bachur. He wanted to know how many hours a day he spends learning, if he is punctual, uses his time well and keeps to the 'sedarim' (study sessions), if he prays in the yeshiva, if he participates in the shiurim, asks good questions and grasps the answers...

Once he was satisfied with the information that he heard, he thanked the Rosh Yeshiva for giving him of his time and stood up to go.

Rabbi Shmuel, in his refined and gentle way, asked him:

"Until now, you were the one asking me questions, maybe, my friend, you will now allow me to ask you several questions? I understand that you are looking for a shidduch for your daughter, and you seem pleased with what you heard. You seem to feel that this is all that your daughter needs to know- what time exactly he comes to 'seder', if he grasps the complexity of the gemarah etc.

But I think that your daughter is very interested in knowing if the bachur is... a mentsch! It would be fitting to ask me how many times a week he brushes his teeth, if at all... if it is pleasant to sit next to him and how he behaves in the dining room. Does he make sure to be the first to arrive and grabs the best portion, or after mincha instead of rushing to the dining room he sits down with his chavrutah and learns a little longer, making the most of his time and only later comes and eats whatever is left?

And what happens if the jug of water that is on the table needs filling up, will he be the one to run to the kitchen to fill it up, or does he wait 'patiently' until someone else does it? Does he ever go into the kitchen to thank the workers for their efforts? How does he behave when the food isn't exactly to his taste? Does he eat it anyway, and then go to the kitchen to say "thank you, the food was good", for the workers spent long hours preparing his food? Or does he skip lunch and instead go down to the kiosk and buy junk food?

You came to the conclusion that he is a diligent student. Maybe find out how he behaves when he finishes his learning late at night, when his friends are already sleeping? Does he take off his shoes before going into the room and hold them in his hand so as not to disturb his roommates? Or does he enter noisily? Does he make his bed in the morning, or does he leave his room a mess from the beginning of the 'zman'(semester) until the end?"

"I think", Rabbi Shmuel continued, "that these are things that are really important to your daughter. For if this spoiled bachur who doesn't take others into consideration - will come home from kollel in the afternoon after she has spent the entire morning preparing a meal for him, and he sits down to eat but the food is not exactly to his liking so he makes a face that clearly shows his displeasure, will your daughter be placated by the information that her father found out for her before they became engaged? That he went to speak to Rabbi Rozovsky who told him that in yeshiva he was considered the most brilliant and studious bachur?"

Will she tell herself that although he behaves in an unrefined way and doesn't show consideration for others, to the extent that when he is not satisfied he can even strike the one who tried to please him, nevertheless I really respect him, for he understands all the different 'shitot' (opinions) of the rishonim and achronim in the sugya..."

These were the penetrating words of the Rosh Yeshiva; a lesson which we should personally embrace in knowing how to behave and also to realize what is truly important to find out before going forward with a successful shidduch.



Pearls of the Parshah

Two Friends, Two Ideals

“My lord, heed me! Land worth four hundred silver shekels; between me and you – what is it? Bury your dead.” (Bereishit 23:15)

On the words “between me and you” Rashi cites: “Between two friends like us.”

Since when were Avraham Avinu and Ephron the rasha, friends?

The ‘Imrei Chaim’ brings in his sefer that both of them loved something; Avraham Avinu loved mitzvot and he considered any amount worth it in order to fulfill a mitzva. On the other hand, Ephron the rasha loved money, therefore four hundred silver shekels was nothing for him, for “One who loves money will never be satiated”.

Who is Strong? One who Rules over his Inclination

“And Avraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who controlled all that was his” (Bereishit 24:2)

The simple meaning of these words is that Avraham spoke to his servant Eliezer who managed his master’s home.

The Shelah Hakadoesh offers a different interpretation: “Who controlled all that was his” refers to Avraham Avinu. Eliezer was the servant and elder of the household of Avraham Avinu, who, he Avraham, “controlled all that was his”.

Sometimes a person is blessed by Hashem with great riches, but he is stingy and sparing with his money and doesn’t give much charity. In this case there are certainly impure ‘husks’ together with the power of the Satan who surround his money and prevent him from ruling over his possessions. However, Avraham Avinu was extremely generous and gave much charity; “He controlled all that was his”.

The Main Attribute in a Good Shidduch

“Her will You have designated for your servant, for Yitzchak” (Bereishit 24:14)

Chazal derived many laws and ethics from the conversation that is recorded in the Torah of the servants of the Avot, and especially from this account where

Eliezer was sent to find a wife for his master’s son.

When it comes to shidduchim inquiries, one of the frequently-asked questions is: Which attributes are important to look out for?

In answer to a bachur who asked him this question, Maran HaRav Shach zt”l replied in a letter (‘Michtavim V’ma’amarim, 8”6, 5719):

“Know that the main thing to look for is that she should possess good character traits, for this is the quality which includes everything. Eliezer only tested Rivka in her middot, her chessed, and nothing else. Even when the water in the well rose up for her, he didn’t take this as a proof that she was the right one. Only once she performed chessed with him and his men, did he decide that here was someone fitting to be the wife of Yitzchak.

Concerning the statement “Most sons are similar to the mother’s brothers”, this refers to middot and innate nature, which are generally inherited. But “similar to the mother’s brothers” has no bearing on yirat shamayim. You are concerned that the mother’s brother is Mizrachi, but matters of yirat shamayim are guided by free choice, and each person has free choice”.

The Lust for Money

“Lavan ran to the man” (Bereishit 24:29)

Why was Lavan in such a rush that he had to run to the man?

Rashi explains that after Lavan saw the nose ring that Rivkah had received, he realized that this is a person with great assets “and he set his eyes on his money”.

“He set his eyes on his money” is an interesting expression? Why stress specifically the eyes?

The sefer ‘Shnei Hame’orot’ explains that it is well-known that large steps dim a person’s eyesight (Berachot 43a), and this is why Rashi asks: Why and for what did he run? Would his eyes not be affected by this hurrying?

He answers: “He set his eyes on his money”, Lavan’s lust for money was so great that he was even prepared to sacrifice his eyes and lose his sight for this.

Treasures

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



The Lesson of Akeidat Yitzchak

“Sarah died in Kiryat-Arba which is Chevron in the land of Canaan; and Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her” (Bereishit 23:2)

Rashi explains, “The death of Sarah follows the Akeidah for through the news of the Akeidah when she heard that her son was summoned to be sacrificed and in the end was spared, her neshama flew out of her and she died”.

I heard a different explanation, which also answers the question of why the Akeidah is adjacent to Sarah’s petirah. When Sarah heard that her son was almost sacrificed on the mizbe’ach and in the end was spared, she was so distressed that her son did not give up his life for the sake of Hashem’s honor, that her deep pain caused her neshama to leave her body.

This explanation gives rise to a difficulty: It is known that before he left, when Avraham was preparing his belongings and getting ready to go up to Har Hamori’ah to bind his son Yitzchak, he told Sarah that he is taking Yitzchak to learn Torah in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever.

It is hard to understand why Avraham found it necessary to change the truth and not tell Sarah the true reason. If we say that he deviated from the truth because he did not wish to upset her that her son is about to die, on the contrary, in the end she was distressed that he wasn’t slaughtered, to the extent that she even died from distress. So it seems that if Avraham would have told her what he is about to do, she would have been extremely happy to know about the zchut that is awaiting her, that her own son will be offered up as a sacrifice to Hashem?

We can reconcile the question with the verse “A man who would die in a tent” (Bamidbar 19:14). Chazal say (Shabbat 83b) that this refers to a talmid chacham who sits in the Beit Midrash and kills himself in the tent of Torah. He subdues all his inclinations and kills his desires for the sake of learning the holy Torah. Learning Torah demands great stamina and strength, for in any place of holiness the evil inclination immediately tries to cause a person to stumble; all the more so when it comes to Torah learning. If so, when a person truly manages to prevent his physical desires from having control over him, it is considered as if he is killing a part of himself in the tent (of Torah), and great reward awaits him.

When Avraham chose to tell Sarah that Yitzchak is going to ‘bind himself’ to the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, it was in order to sweeten the news for her, and to give over an important message for future generations – whoever subdues all his desires and wishes for the sake of learning Torah, is compared to Yitzchak who was tied to the altar and the reward for this is exceedingly great.



The Sensitivity of Gedolei Yisrael

The Rosh Yehsiva, HaGaon Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Man shach zt”l told over that once he witnessed his uncle, HaGaon Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt”l, going up the stairs of his building and a few moments later coming back down and waiting. Harav Shach approached him and asked him if something had happened, maybe he needs help with something? Rabbi Isser Zalman answered him:

“Baruch Hashem everything is ok, but when I approached the door of my home I heard the cleaning woman singing to herself while working. If I would have entered she would have had to stop singing. She is a woman who has a hard life and these songs bring her a bit of joy. I don’t want to cause her any additional distress; I will wait here until she finishes her work and then I will go back up to my home.”

Men of Faith

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

Early one morning, when most people had not yet awakened from their sleep, a small group of congregants made their way to the Beit Hakeneset, wrapped in their tallit and tefillin.

R’ Yonah ibn Chaim, zt”l, who was one of the early risers, discovered upon reaching the entrance to the Beit Hakeneset, that he was not the first one there. Through the wall, he heard two voices engaged in the study of Torah inside.

The sweet voice of one of the people learning Torah was familiar to him. It was none other than the voice of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.

Rabbi Yonah lingered a bit outside the Beit Hakeneset, in order not to disturb the two from their study. When the sounds of the voices subsided, he entered the Beit Hakeneset, but was met with a surprise. Inside, Rabbi Chaim was sitting alone.

Since R’ Yonah had clearly heard two voices studying, he approached Rabbi Chaim and asked him, “Where is your chavruta with whom you were learning?”

“Did you see him?” Rabbi Chaim inquired. “Yes!” answered R’ Yonah. “Fortunate are you that you merited seeing the face of Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory,” Rabbi Chaim told him. “Eliyahu Hanavi is the one who was learning with me in the Beit Hakeneset.”

During their discussion, Rabbi Chaim made R’ Yonah promise that he would not reveal to anyone what he had seen as long as Rabbi Chaim lived. R’ Yonah kept his word, and only after Rabbi Chaim passed away, did he reveal the secret.

The Tzaddik’s Violin

The tzaddik Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy”a, told Moreinu v’Rabbeinu, shlita, that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol wrote 150 supplications, corresponding to the 150 psalms in Sefer Tehillim. He added that Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan had a musical instrument resembling a violin, which had four chords, corresponding to the four categories of Creation: inanimate, vegetable, living things, and man. Each chord in the violin produced seven different sounds, corresponding to the seven sefirot.

Moreinu v’Rabbeinu explained that when the tzaddik would play the instrument, through his music he would connect all the worlds, referred to as abiya (an acronym for: atzilut, briyah, yetzirah, and asiyah). It is common knowledge in the field of Kabbalah that man serves as a conduit to connect all the worlds to their Source. This is further explained in the sefer Chessed l’Avraham, by Rabbi Avraham Azulai, zt”l.

Moreinu v’Rabbeinu added, “It seems to me, but a humble servant of my Master, and grandson of my holy grandfather Rabbi Chaim Pinto, that this is the reason why Divine inspiration does not reside upon a prophet unless he is joyful. This is illustrated by Elisha Hanavi and Shaul Hamelech, among others, who merited Divine inspiration only when they were serenaded by the music played by a violin. Only through joyfulness, is the prophet able to connect all the worlds and consequently have Divine inspiration or prophecy rest upon him.”