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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 Chosen One of the Avot

"The lads grew up and Esav became one who knows hunting, a man of the field; but Ya'akov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents" (Bereishit 25:27)

The above verse is how the Torah describes the beginning of the life of Ya'akov Avinu, the chosen one of the Avot, who due to his greatness merited speaking with Hashem even when Yitzchak Avinu, his father, was still alive. He was considered as the chosen one of the Avot, for he was "a wholesome man, abiding in tents". There are two explanations for his status: It is either owing to the power of Torah that he had, or due to his unswerving integrity and honesty, the opposite of the middah of Esav and Lavan who were swindlers.

We will explain later that Ya'akov Avinu took their trait of swindling and turned it into something positive by using it to overcome the evil inclination. We will clarify how he learned to use this trait for the good.

Ya'akov Avinu knew that Lavan Ha'arami, the Aramean, was a swindler just as his name suggested. He was even worse than Esav, for Ya'akov was already familiar with Esav's wicked ways. Lavan, with his shrewdness, indeed managed to cheat Ya'akov Avinu and gave him Leah in place of Rachel. Nevertheless, at the end of his stay in Lavan's house, Ya'akov Avinu says, "I have sojourned (יתרג) with Lavan" (Bereishit 32:5) and he was implying "Though I have sojourned with Lavan, I have observed the 613 Divine Commandments (ג'ורת) and have not learned from his evil ways" (Rashi). He remained intact, spiritually.

From where did Ya'akov Avinu draw this enormous power to fight against his evil inclination? He overcame his yetzer through using the power of deception. Meaning, he used the very strength of the enemy in order to overcome it. From here we learn the power of Torah that is learnt with great persistence. For 14 years Ya'akov studied Torah, in exile, far from home, without letting his body rest. This power impacted him deep inside and gave him the strength to fight against all the ploys of the yetzer harah. But we still need to contemplate the matter; how Ya'akov was able to implant deep and permanent foundations in his spirit, which enabled him to remain in close proximity to people who were experts in the craft of evil, yet not to be influenced by them. Rather, he took all that he observed in them and used those very ways to fight against them.

Ya'akov Avinu, who dedicated his whole life to learning Torah, felt the need to invest another fourteen years in yeshiva, on his way from Be'er Sheva to Charan, even though this delayed his fulfilling the commandment of his father to go and find a wife. Even though he was already sixty-three years old, he knew that only through learning Torah in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever for fourteen years, will he be capable of overcoming the challenge that was waiting for him and to fight against and abolish the power of evil in Lavan.

According to this, we can understand what Chazal

say "Rabbi Yishma'el says that if this villain (the yetzer hara) strikes you, pull him to the Beit Midrash (Kidushin 30b). This is the tactic to employ against the evil inclination and it is the only solution – learning our holy Torah. This is indeed what Ya'akov Avinu did, before going to Lavan he stopped on the way and went to learn in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever.

We see here a wonderful thing. After dedicating fourteen years to learning Torah in the Yeshiva of Shem and Ever, he departed for Charan and on the way experienced a revelation from Hashem. As the verse says "And behold! A ladder was set earthward and its top reached heavenward" (Bereishit 28:12). Due to his supreme efforts, he merited a revelation of the Shechina. Certainly, had he known that this place was so holy he would not have slept there, as it says, "Ya'akov awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Hashem is present in this place and I did not know!" And he became frightened and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of G-d and this is the gate of the heavens!" (ibid. 16-17). But Hashem delayed him and made him fall asleep there so that He could reveal Himself to him. All this Ya'akov merited because he sacrificed his body and soul in order to diligently learn Torah.

From here we learn that Ya'akov Avinu, with his whole-hearted devotion to our holy Torah, dedicated every limb of his body for avodat Hashem; even his legs were committed to learning Torah and desired to sit and learn. This was the first time that he went to sleep in those entire fourteen years, and even this was not by choice for Hashem brought the slumber upon him. And even in this sleep he dreamt about divrei Torah. As it is written, "And Ya'akov awoke from his sleep" (Bereishit 28:16) and Chazal say on this, "Don't read it as 'his sleep' but 'his learning'" (Bereishit Rabbah 69:7). How unlike our generation where people swallow tablets in order to gratify their body's desire for a good sleep!

One of the Admorim of Alexander zt"l, during the terrible Holocaust, was about to make Kiddush on Seder night. He began with words of encouragement to his chassidim and said, "Kadesh- a Jew must sanctify every limb in his body". This idea is very difficult and one achieves it only through Torah learning. As an example, when one washes ones hands one says the blessing, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us regarding washing the hands." One becomes holy through water, for Torah is compared to water. These righteous people possessed a strength that is impossible to describe. They faced their terribly cruel deaths while singing songs of praise to their Creator. This power came from their total sanctification and supreme dedication to their Creator.

This foundation is what Ya'akov Avinu implanted in all of us. A person must constantly stay connected to Hashem, and if he feels a weakening in his spirituality, the way to overcome it is only through learning Torah.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

2 - Rabbi Ahron Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood

3 - Rabbi Yosef David

4 - Rabbi Rafael Kadir Tzeban

5 - Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Eidels, the Maharsha

6 - Rabbi Shmuel Pinto, son of Rabbi Daniel Pinto

7 - Rabbi Rafael David Sebban, Rav of Turkey

8 - Rabbi Avraham HaKohen, author of 'Mishmeret Kehunah'



Walking in their Ways

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

Four for Faith

How happy was the man who informed me that he and his wife were blessed to be expecting a child. But their blessing was not ordinary in the least. It was quadrupled, for his wife was expecting four babies!

"After some testing," he confided, his voice lowered and lacking some of its former enthusiasm, "the doctors are afraid that not all of the babies will make it. They suggest aborting two of the four, so that the other two will have a chance to be born healthy."

He asked my opinion.

Obviously, each case must be dealt with individually, and one cannot take an example from any situation for his own issue. My advice to this man was that he should check into the halachic aspect of the matter. My opinion was that he should not abort at all. Rather, he should strengthen his faith in Hashem. Just as Hashem had placed four neshamot into his wife's body, He would see to it that they would live and be born healthy.

The man acquiesced, refusing to obey the doctors.

With the progression of the pregnancy, the doctors tried to persuade the couple to abort two of the fetuses, so that the other two could live. The man came to me once again, asking for my advice. I told him, "Where there is faith and trust in Hashem, there is no room for danger! Hashem gives a woman the ability to carry children and give birth to healthy babies. He alone holds the key to life. Have trust in Him and do not be discouraged by the doctors' words."

This man was not an observant Jew, but he had firm faith in Hashem. He withstood the test and refused to abort.

This was not an easy challenge. The doctors warned him that at any given moment, his wife was likely to lose all four babies. But his steadfast faith stood by him and gave him the strength to cope with this challenge. In the merit of his faith, he received four beautiful, bouncing babies.

This reinforced his faith in Hashem even further. He made a complete turnaround and is now an observant Jew.

How great is the power of faith to bring blessing and miracle upon the one who trusts in Hashem.

The Haftarah

"The prophecy of the word of Hashem" (Malachi 1:1)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Ya'akov Avinu a"h and Esav the rasha, "Was not Esav the brother of Ya'akov", which is the same topic as the Parsha which tells of the birth of the twins, Ya'akov and Esav, and of the similarity of their offspring to them.



Guard Your Tongue

Rechilut, Present or Not

It is forbidden to speak rechilut even if it is completely true and there is no slight untruth mixed in the narrative. It is forbidden both in the absence of the person who spoke these words and even if he knows that he would be prepared to say it in front of the person.

All the more so if he dares to say it in front of him – "You spoke about him"; "You did such and such to him" - it is forbidden and his sin is even greater.



Words of our Sages

The Way the Shadchan Extols the Father

"And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth" (Bereishit 27:28)

In the middle of Parshat Toldot we read about the blessings that Yitzchak Avinu a"h blessed his son Ya'akov Avinu, and afterwards his older son, Esav. If we delve into the content of the blessings we will find something that needs clarifying.

In the blessings that were showered on Ya'akov, his father starts to bless him with something heavenly, "And may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens" and only afterwards with something worldly, "and of the fatness of the earth". However, when Yitzchak blessed Esav, he started with the worldly blessing, "of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling" and finished with the heavenly blessing, "and of the dew of the heavens of above" (ibid. 39)

What lies behind this difference in the way that they were blessed?

The sefer "Sha'ar Bat Rabim" brings a beautiful explanation on this, using the following parable:

When a shadchan suggests a shidduch for a boy, if the bachur is a true ben-Torah, diligent and dedicated to Torah learning, then the shadchan starts by praising the father of the girl in this way: He describes how the father is someone who loves and appreciates Torah, he has great yirat shamayim and all his aspirations are for Torah and yirat shamayim, he even has his own Beit Midrash full of Torah books, where the bachur will be able to sit and delve into Torah day and night. At the end of the conversation he mentions, by the way, that the father also has the means to provide for his daughter since he owns great wealth.

On the other hand, if the bachur is not a ben-Torah and worldly things are more important to him than learning Torah, the shadchan will change around his words. Right at the start he brings up the father's financial means, describing how he owns a playing field and a gym and of his intention to provide generously for the couple. Afterwards he mentions that he also has a large library with many Torah texts and if the bachur so wishes, he can sit there and study.

The shadchan speaks to each one according to his spiritual level.

This is indeed what occurred with Yitzchak Avinu. Divine Inspiration spoke from this throat, therefore when it came to Ya'akov who was "a wholesome man, abiding in tents", who spent his days in Torah and avodah, Hashem guided Yitzchak to bless him first with heavenly things and only afterwards with "fatness of the earth" – for "If there is no flour there is no Torah".

On the other hand, when it came to Esav who followed his desires and loved worldly pleasures, Hashem guided Yitzchak to start the blessing with worldly gifts, and as Rashi explains he gave him "Italy of Greece (Rome)", for there he would be able to enjoy the pleasures of this world. Secondly, if he wishes, he can also enjoy something spiritual "of the dew of the heavens of above".



Pearls of the Parshah

He Loved the Child, Not the Food

"Yitzchak loved Esav for game was in his mouth" (Bereishit 25:28)

This verse gives rise to a difficulty. How can one say about Yitzchak, that he loved his son for game was in his mouth? Yitzchak loved him because Esav gave him tasty food??

A Talmid Chacham brought this question before the Maharil Diskin, who answered in this way:

Yitzchak Avinu did not love Esav because of what he hunted, because of the food that he brought him, rather he loved him because he was his firstborn son. Where do we see this love? From the fact that "game was in his mouth" - from the fact that Yitzchak ate from his shechita. Had Yitzchak considered Esav a rasha, he would not have eaten from his shechita and would have hated him.

This shows us that Yitzchak considered Esav a tzaddik, therefore he loved him.

The words "for game was in his mouth" is not the reason for Yitzchak's love, rather it is the proof of his love for Esav.

The Maharil Diskin adds that as we know, Hashem prevents tzaddikim from making mistakes, especially when it comes to food. Yitzchak did not transgress the prohibition of eating forbidden food by relying on Esav's shechita. Rivkah, who understood who Esav really was, made sure that there was always someone supervising Esav's shechita.

The Torah's Protection

"May the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Ya'akov" (Bereishit 27:41)

The Kli Yakar writes that Esav wished his father would die, for a mourner is prohibited from learning Torah, and so Ya'akov would not have the merit of the Torah's protection.

The book 'Derech Sichah' brings a question that was asked to Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita. A mourner is permitted to learn certain aspects of Torah, so it seems that he does have the merit of the Torah's protection?

Rabbi Chaim shlita answered, that a mourner is indeed forbidden to learn Torah. The sections that are permitted are allowed only because they are applicable to his situation. This is compared to the Torah learning of women, who learn only in order to know how to observe the mitzvot. They do not learn for the sake of learning itself, and this is not enough of a merit to earn the Torah's protection.

A Person Becomes his Clothing

"Rivkah then took her older son Esav's clean garments which were with her in the house, and clothed Ya'akov her young son" (Bereishit 27:15)

The holy Rabbi Naftoli of Ropshitz zt"l says, "Take a look at the influence the clothes have on a person!" He explains: Not for nothing did Rivkah dress Ya'akov with the precious garments of Esav. It was extremely hard for Ya'akov to stand before his father the tzaddik and tell a lie, for his entire being was bound up with the truth, just as it says "Grant truth to Ya'akov". If so, how would he merit to receive the blessings that Rivkah was determined that he should receive?

Therefore, his mother acted with ingenuity and dressed him in the clothes of Esav. When a person dresses like Esav, he automatically becomes a bit like him...

Treasures

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



The Tent of Ya'akov Versus the Field of Esav

"The lads grew up and Esav became one who knows hunting, a man of the field; but Ya'akov was a wholesome man, abiding in tents" (Bereishit 25:27)

Ya'akov and Esav- two brothers, two lifestyles. Esav was known as a man of the 'field', while Ya'akov was a man of 'tents'.

A tent is generally pitched in a field with the help of pegs so that it should remain steady, so that even a sudden strong wind will not blow it over. The size of the pegs must be in proportion to the size of the tent- a large tent needs large, strong pegs so that it should not collapse no matter the weather conditions.

Ya'akov sat in 'tents' and Esav was a man of the 'field'. This alludes to the fact that Ya'akov, in order not to be influenced by the 'work of the field', referring to the concept of materialism, had to pitch his tent firmly with strong pegs. This tent refers to the tent of Torah. And there inside the tent he sacrificed everything for Torah, so that he shouldn't be influenced by Esav the rasha, a man of the field.

This is a lesson for all generations. If a person wishes to be saved from the 'field', from the trivialities of this world, he must pitch his tent firmly. This is the only way to be protected from the superficialities of the time.

Ya'akov Avinu pitched his tent in the field, where he was secluded and separated from the rest of the world. Inside the tent he could grow spiritually and devote his entire being to Torah. In the merit of the Torah that Ya'akov learned, he was able to inspire all his surroundings with the spirit of Torah, all from inside the tent.

Therefore, when Ya'akov left Be'er Sheva the people sensed that a tzaddik had left and they felt the lack of blessing which they merited from having the presence of Ya'akov among them. Chazal say, "A righteous person's departure from a place leaves a void. As long as he lives in a city, he constitutes its glory, its splendor, and its beauty; when he departs, its glory, splendor, and beauty depart with him". Ya'akov Avinu, by secluding himself in the tent, and his toil in Torah, was the glory, splendor and beauty of the place. In his merit the entire town was blessed.

When Ya'akov Avinu left, they all felt the loss of his presence. This was because he firmly planted his tent in the field, submerging himself in Torah study, and secluding himself from all materialism of this world. Through this he transformed the field where he planted his tent, to a spiritual place.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Sand or Stars?

“I will increase your offspring like the stars of the heaven” (Bereishit 26:4)

In several places in Tanach, Am Yisrael are compared to the stars of the heavens and to the sand of the seashore.

The Gemarah tells us (Megillah 16a) that when Am Yisrael reach great heights, they are compared to the stars, and when they fall, chalilah, they are compared to dust and sand. The stars in heaven seem to be spread out, each one a light on its own, with thousands of kilometers separating between them.

Grains of sand, however, seem to be stuck to one another, as if united. But in fact, the opposite is true. Rabbi Yisrael of Tchorakatov zt”l says, that in actual fact the stars are grouped in many sets, all surrounding the largest and brightest star, as in the arrangement of the sun. On the other hand, concerning the sand, each grain stands on its own; any slight wind will blow it from its place...

So it is with Am Yisrael. When they are ‘down’, at a low level, they are compared to the sand. In the absence of achdut (unity), any slight wind blows them apart. But when they are united, which means they are all focused on the Torah and it is the Torah that holds them together, then they are on a high level and are compared to the stars.



Men of Faith

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

Saved by the Caftan

Once, when Rabbi Aminadav Krispin, shlita, the Rav of Kiryat Bialik, rode on a bus from Haifa to Tel Aviv, a senior officer of the police force sat beside him. In the course of their conversation, they discovered that they both originated from Mogador.

Inevitably, Rabbi Krispin asked the police officer, “Did you know Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan?”

“Of course!” answered the officer. “Who did not know him?” He continued to surprise Rabbi Krispin, saying, “I am alive only in his merit.” He began to relate his incredible story.

When he was young, he decided to work as a truck driver for a French transportation company, running a route from Morocco to Mauritania. Since at that time there was a war raging between the French and the Moslem rebels, his mother advised him to get a blessing from Rabbi Chaim Pinto before investing in a truck.

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan blessed the young man with a safe journey, and added that he advised his mother to buy him a white caftan, which he should keep next to the driver’s seat.

The suggestion did not find favor in the eyes of the young fellow. “Honorable Rabbi, in our days, only the Arabs wear caftans. The modern European style has already replaced the caftans. Why should I buy one?!”

The Rav just repeated his advice, “Do as I say. The time will come when the caftan will save your life.” He did not elaborate any further.

The young man relented to the Rav’s request. The caftan

was bought for him as the tzaddik suggested and placed near the driver’s seat. The words of the tzaddik rang in his ears, “The time will come when the caftan will save your life.”

Four months passed since he had begun his new job working for the transportation company. One night, he parked in a place where drivers found shelter from the rebels. Due to the cold night, he put on the caftan that his mother had bought him on the advice of Rabbi Chaim Pinto and fell asleep.

At sunrise, the driver awoke from his deep sleep refreshed and full of energy, ready to continue on his route. However, when he looked out of the window, he was horrified at the sight that met his eyes. The decapitated heads of the drivers were hanging from the trucks that had stopped at the stopover...

Later, he realized that on that very night, the rebels had struck the parking area. They had methodically passed from truck to truck, inspecting the sleeping drivers, and concluded that anyone dressed in European attire was French, promptly cutting off his head. However, the drivers dressed in traditional white caftans were not harmed, since the rebels figured that these were Moroccan Arabs.

“This is how I was saved in the merit of the tzaddik’s blessings and advice,” the officer explained.

When the driver returned home, he told his mother what had occurred and then hurried to Rabbi Chaim’s house to thank him and recite the Bircat Hagomel, thanking Hashem for saving him from death. That same week he packed up all his belongings and left the country to live Eretz Yisrael.