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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"l



Maskil LéDavid

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

The Supreme Merit of Torah Learning

"Ya'akov departed from Be'er Sheva and went toward Charan. He encountered the place and spent the night there because the sun had set; he took from the stones of the place which he arranged around his head, and lay down in that place." (Bereishit 28:10-11)

The Midrash says that the words 'he lay down in that place', are a reference to the fact that only in that place did he lie down, while during the entire fourteen years that he learnt Torah in Yeshivat Shem v'Ever, he didn't sleep at all. Rather, he learnt Torah without considering his physical needs.

On the way to Charan, Ya'akov was pursued by Eliphaz, the son of Esav. Esav had sent Eliphaz to kill Ya'akov for he was angry with Ya'akov for taking the blessings from him. Eliphaz did not kill Ya'akov but instead took all his money, in accordance with the dictum of Chazal (Nedarim 64:2), that a poor person is considered dead. In this way it could be considered as if he had fulfilled his father's command. Eliphaz was not a wicked person like his father and had no desire to kill Ya'akov; he simply wished to obey his father. Eliphaz was a talmid of Ya'akov Avinu and spent his time learning Torah. Therefore when Ya'akov Avinu told him that if he is left bereft of all his possessions he will be considered dead, Eliphaz listened to him and did not take his life. This is the power of the Torah's influence. Eliphaz was inspired by his master's words and heeded his advice.

There is something very surprising here. Why did Ya'akov hand over all his money? He was a courageous person and could easily have overpowered Eliphaz and killed him. Especially since Chazal tell us "Righteous people, their possessions are as dear to them as their bodies" (Chulin 91a). This is because tzaddikim know that whatever they have been given by Hashem is theirs only for the purpose of serving Him. If so, why did Ya'akov agree to give Eliphaz all his money, leaving himself with the status of a poor beggar, when he could have killed him and fulfilled, "One who wishes to kill you, precede him and kill him first".

Ya'akov could have indeed killed Eliphaz for he was very strong, but since Eliphaz possessed the merit of Torah learning, Ya'akov didn't kill him. With Torah it is impossible to fight. In addition, he understood that Eliphaz was not acting on his own right but out of his desire to honor his father.

Eliphaz, being the son of a wicked father, should have naturally grown up similar to his father, but he did not follow in his ways. He went to learn Torah from Ya'akov Avinu, for he recognized the truth and wished to study Torah. Therefore, Hashem assisted him in his desire to grow in Torah, even though he was brought up in the house of a rasha. Chazal teach us, "A person is led on the path that he wishes

to take." Every single person is capable of learning Torah. If he possesses the desire, Hashem will help him and he will merit fulfilling his wish. Since Eliphaz chose the Torah way, Ya'akov did not kill him, but instead gave Eliphaz the option of seizing all his money so that in this way Eliphaz will still be able to fulfill his father's command.

It is interesting to note Esav's reaction when Eliphaz reported back to him saying that he didn't fulfill his request in the exact way that his father wished. Was Esav satisfied with the outcome, or did he still wish to kill Ya'akov? It seems that it didn't bother Esav that Ya'akov was still alive, for his main wish was to prevent Ya'akov from learning Torah and serving Hashem. On the contrary he was happy, for he imagined that being penniless, Ya'akov will no longer have the opportunity of devoting himself to Torah study and then he will definitely fall from his spiritual level while staying with Lavan. But Ya'akov Avinu was not concerned. Even though Eliphaz left him destitute, he went to learn in the Yeshiva of Shem v'Ever, stayed there for fourteen years and only then went to Charan.

Chazal teach us, "The deeds of our Forefathers are an indication for their children" (Tanchuma Lecha Lecha 9). Each act of the Avot empowered Klal Yisrael with the strength to behave in the same manner. The self-sacrifice of the Avot entered the neshamot of Am Yisrael and implanted this strength within us. Therefore, this parsha with Ya'akov and Eliphaz must leave us with the knowledge that we have an obligation to learn Torah and serve Hashem, even when we encounter difficulties and the yetzer hara disturbs us. On the contrary, when a person tries to prevail and learns Torah despite any obstacles, then Hashem sends His assistance and gives him the strength to overcome his difficulties. This is when a person truly achieves higher spiritual levels, when he stands up to the challenge that Hashem places in his path and overcomes it.

It is said over in the name of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin zt"l, that even if only one person in the entire world is learning Torah, it is enough of a merit for the world to continue existing. "If My covenant with the night and with the day would not be; had I not set up the laws of heaven and earth" (Yirmiyahu 33:25). This refers to learning Torah, for the merit of learning Torah is what enables the world to exist (Nedarim 32a). Therefore we must strengthen ourselves in Torah learning and immerse ourselves in Torah under all circumstances, even when we encounter difficulties. The main merit of a person is in withstanding a challenge. When Hashem sees our efforts He sends His assistance and endows us with the capabilities of successfully dealing with the adversity, with determination and courage.



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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

9 - Rabbi Natan Salem, Yeshivat 'Porat Yosef'

10 - Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Eitz Chaim'

11 - The Dayan, Rabbi Moshe Harrari, a Gadol from Aram Tzava

12 - Rabbi Shlomo Luria, the Maharshal, author of 'Yam Shel Shlomo'

13 - Rabbi David Shalosh

14 - Rabbi Matityah Garji

15 - Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi



Walking in their Ways

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

Trusting through Tranquility

It was an Erev Shabbat when my family was staying in Ashdod in Eretz Yisrael. The calendar showed the end of the month, the time when I was supposed to pay stipends to the two hundred and fifty young kollel men, who toil in the study of Torah in our institutions in Eretz Yisrael and abroad. This is their only source of sustenance for their families.

Many thoughts flitted through my mind, as I tried to find a solution to this situation.

Then Shabbat arrived. From the moment she spread her wings over our household, and the neshamah yeteirah entered me, I felt enveloped in an otherworldly sense of peace. I placed my package of concern in the able care of Hashem, with faith that He would attend to my difficulties. I sailed upon the tranquil waters of Shabbat, as though I had not a worry in the world.

I walked joyfully to the Beit Hakeneset and delivered Torah discourses there. We sang Shabbat zemirot, as usual. Even after Shabbat left, its magic did not end. I sat in peace, committing to writing the words of Torah that I had said earlier.

My wife, noticing my serene state, could not help but wonder. "It seems like you took care of the problem of the stipends," she stated. "Is that correct?"

"Yes!" I responded, full of faith. "Hashem will send His help very soon."

Seeing my tremendous faith, Hashem sent His deliverance that very evening in a most unnatural manner. I was thereby able to pay the kollel fellows on time.

The Haftarah

The haftarah of the week: **"And yet my people waver"** (Hoshe'a 11)

The Ashkenazim start reading from: "Ya'akov fled to the field of Aram" (Hoshe'a 12)

The connection to the Parsha; the Haftarah speaks about Ya'akov holding on to Esav's heel, as the verse says, **"In the womb he seized his brother's heel"** (Hoshe'a 12:4). This week's Parsha tells of Ya'akov running away from his brother Esav.



Guard Your Tongue

You Spoke About Me!

If Reuven speaks about Shimon in front of Levi, and then Levi goes and tells Shimon, Shimon is prohibited from later going over to Reuven and saying, "How could you talk like that about me to Levi?" This would be a violation of the prohibition of rechilus.

Even if he doesn't mention Levi's name and only says, "I heard that you said such and such about me", if through this Reuven will understand who passed on this information, it is forbidden. Unfortunately, many people violate this halacha.



Words of our Sages

A Glimpse of True Yirat Shamayim

"He lied down in that place. And he dreamt, and behold! A ladder was set earthward and is top reached heavenward; and behold! angels of G-d were ascending and descending on it." (Bereishit 28:11-12)

In his dream Ya'akov Avinu beheld all the spiritual levels of the world, the world of asi'ah, bri'ah, yetzirah and atzilut, and he beheld a ladder set earthward. This means that he was shown all the future prophesies and the purpose of Am Yisrael throughout the generations. Hashem promised him "Your offspring shall be as the dust of the earth...I will guard you wherever you go" (Bereishit 28:14-15). With our limited perception, we would have expected Ya'akov Avinu to start dancing with great joy when he awoke.

But the verse tells us, "Ya'akov awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Hashem is present in this place and I did not know!" And Rashi explains, "Had I known I would not have slept in such a holy place." Instead of rejoicing, Ya'akov was afraid that perhaps he had committed a slight fraction of a sin by sleeping in a holy place.

Ya'akov Avinu merited having the length of his journey shortened, the laws of creation were changed for his sake (the sun set before its time), and many revelations and promises were revealed to him in his dream. We would take all these elements as a sign that he surely has nothing to be concerned about. But Ya'akov Avinu awoke and jumped up in fright, saying "Surely Hashem is present in this place", had I known I would not have slept! Ya'akov Avinu was prepared to forgo all the revelations and instead of being filled with joy was extremely frightened, for who knows...maybe he had committed a small sin!

The sefer "U'matok Ha'or" brings a story about the Admor, Rabbi Avrohom of Slonim zt"l, who turned to his gabbai and said, "One thinks that today the Lithuanian Jews don't have the same degree of yirat shamayim as the Chassidim. Come and I will show you a person who is a true yarei shamayim." The Admor got up and together they went over to the house of the Rav of Brisk. They were told that the Rav had gone to check the validity of a mikvah that had just been built.

The Admor didn't wait for the Rav of Brisk to return and immediately set out to the mikvah to meet the Rav of Brisk. When they arrived they saw the Rav holding a candle in his hand, checking every corner of the mikveh. Finally he pronounced, "It is kosher, it is kosher".

The gabbai of the Admor was a professional in the laws of mikva'ot, and from afar noticed that there was a crack in a certain place. He brought this to the attention of the Rav of Brisk. The Rav immediately checked it out and when he realized that the gabbai was correct in his evaluation, his entire body started trembling and his hands and legs were knocking each other. With great consternation, the Admor told his gabbai, "Come, let us leave. I cannot bear to witness this distressing sight."

This gives us some idea of what true fear of Heaven and fear of sin is all about.



Pearls of the Parshah

Reserving our Wares

“Then Ya’akov took a vow saying, “If G-d will be with me, will guard me on this way that I am going; will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear.” (Bereishit 28:20)

The sefer ‘Netivot Rabboteinu’ brings the following story: One of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbes, Rabbi Sholom Ber zt”l, once went to visit Reb Chaim Brisker zt”l. As they took leave of each other, the Brisker Rav asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a blessing. His blessing was: You should be blessed by Hashem both in ruchniyut and gashmiyut.

Rabbi Chaim replied that he wishes to be blessed with ruchniyut alone. The Admor was surprised and asked him to explain.

The Brisker Rav answered: Simple G-d fearing people take their material blessings and transform them into something spiritual. For example, those blessed with wealth give a lot of tzedakah, therefore they require a lot of material assets. But with us Rabbanim and Admorim it is the opposite. We exchange our ruchniyut for the sake of materialism, therefore we need an added measure of spiritual blessings so that we should have what to sell and still be left with a portion for ourselves!

Out of the Public Eye

“And whatever You will give me, I shall repeatedly tithe to You” (Bereishit 28:22)

The words “I shall repeatedly tithe to you”, are translated by Onkelos to mean, “I will separate before You”.

What does ‘before You’ imply?

The ‘Tur Zahav’ explains: Ya’akov says I will tithe to You – for You, Hashem, for Your sake. How does one give in a way that shows it is for Hashem’s sake? By giving ‘before You’. Before Hashem alone and not in front of an audience. Not just when everyone is looking on with admiration...

Blessing on a Pleasant Smell

“This time let me gratefully praise Hashem” (Bereishit 29:35)

Yehuda was Leah’s fourth child. Why especially with his birth did Leah thank Hashem, and not for her first three children?

Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen zt”l in his sefer Meshech Chochma writes: For three of the senses that a person

is endowed with - sight, hearing and touch - Chazal did not establish a blessing to be said when a person enjoys their benefit. For example, one does not make a blessing before enjoying a pleasant voice. Chazal did establish a blessing to be said before inhaling a pleasant smell, as it says in the Gemara (Berachot 43b) on the verse “Let all souls praise” – smell is something that brings pleasure to the neshama.

Leah’s firstborn, Reuven, was given his name “Because Hashem has discerned my humiliation”. Discernment is related to the sense of sight. Her second son, Shimon was called so “Because Hashem has heard” – the sense of hearing. Leah named her third son Levi, which has relevance to the sense of touch. In all these three instances there is no obligation to bless. Only when it came to Yehuda, who was blessed that Mashiach will descend from his children (Yeshayahu 11:3), and we are told concerning Mashiach that “וְחִירָהוּ - He will be imbued (חִירָה שׁוּחַ) with a spirit of fear of Hashem”, was it now in place for Leah to give thanks.

A Man of Truth

“Ya’akov’s anger flared up at Rachel” (Bereishit 30:2)

Out of all the Avot, we only find a reaction of anger with Ya’akov Avinu, as we are told in the above verse. Also it says, “Then Ya’akov became angered and took up his grievance with Lavan” (Bereishit 31:36)

Why is this?

The tzaddik Rabbi Yitzchok Meir of Gur, the Chiddushei Harim, answered this question in a lecture that he gave to his chassidim: Since Ya’akov Avinu personified middat ha’emet, and a truthful person is unable to experience this world in an indifferent manner and with an inner peace, as a result he is not always able to control his stormy spirit and prevent himself from expressing anger and rage.

The Chiddushei Harim finished off, as if talking to himself: “The Kotzker Rebbe was also totally committed to the truth without looking to compromise. As a result of this some people were of the impression that he was a strict person who was easily annoyed. But, when to get angry and how to get angry, this is something that one could learn from the Kotzker Rebbe.”

Treasures

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



The Supremacy of Torah over Tefillah

“Ya’akov departed from Be’er Sheva and went toward Charan” (Bereishit 28:10)

Rashi brings from Chazal (Bereishit Rabba 68:6), “It was only necessary to write and Ya’akov went to Charan, why does his departure need to be mentioned? To tell us that 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.”

I was once asked why Ya’akov’s departure left such a deep impression. Yitzchak Avinu, well-known for his exceptional righteousness, remained in Be’er Sheva. So how come the people felt totally bereft of all glory and splendor?

We can explain this idea through a story that happened with Harav Shach zt”l: A philanthropist from Marseille once came to him with the following dilemma: A certain yeshiva had approached him, asking for a donation towards extending the yeshiva building which could no longer contain the large number of students. On the other hand, someone else had asked him to donate money towards establishing a beit kneset in that area. Since he was finding it hard to decide which was the more important cause, he asked Harav Shach zt”l to decide for him.

Maran HaRav Shach told him that it is preferable to donate the money towards the extension of the yeshiva. He explained that Torah is greater than tefillah, for one can pray anywhere, on the side of the road or in a shul that is a bit further away. But the sound of Torah must be heard in every place, for it is only the Torah that separates the Jew from the goy, and provides the person with the merit to exist in this world.

When I read this story I thought that this could have been the situation when Ya’akov left Be’er Sheva. Yitzchak was known as the pillar of avodah, the pillar of prayer, while Ya’akov was the pillar of Torah. And as HaRav Shach zt”l said, the importance of Torah takes precedence over the importance of tefillah, without chas v’shalom taking away from the significance of tefillah which is extremely great in its own right. Since the value of Torah is exceptionally great, when Ya’akov Avinu left Be’er Sheva the people felt that all the glory of the town had left them. Tefillah on its own does not have this power of allotting splendor and glory to a town.

This could be the idea behind the Rashi. Despite Yitzchak’s presence, Ya’akov’s departure was still keenly felt, due to the supremacy of Torah over tefillah.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Deceiving the Evil Inclination

When Ya'akov Avinu met Rachel, the verse tells us that he said he is her father's brother. Rashi explains that Ya'akov meant to convey to Rachel that if he (her father) will swindle him, he will be a brother to him in deception.

A talmid of Rabbi Yitzchak of Berditchev zt"l told over:

Each time when I wished to leave my home in order to influence people to return to their Father in heaven, the evil inclination would immediately appear and demand: What is the purpose of this journey? It involves bitul Torah and bitul tefillah. It is better that you should stay at home and not go out to inspire other people to repent. He also added another weapon by inducing me with a spirit of laziness and a terrible feeling of tiredness. All with the goal of preventing me from travelling...

How did I react? I said to him, "Listen, the reason I am travelling is to refresh myself and also to earn a bit of money..."

Immediately the yetzer hara and his claims disappeared, together with my tiredness which simply melted away. I would set out feeling fresh and agile and I would arrive at my destination having shed the 'outer husks' with which I had become enwrapped, and then I was able to devote myself to the real purpose of my trip...

Indeed, I am a brother to him in deception...



Men of Faith

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

Why Are You Sad?

The Buganim family was very close with the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. Many times, Rabbi Chaim would visit their house, usually together with his son the tzaddik Refael, and they would stay there for a period of time.

Once, Rabbi Chaim sensed that his hostess was very sad. He asked her, "Why are you sad?"

"I lost my nose rings," she answered despondently. "It is a terrible loss and is bothering me greatly."

"Do not worry," Rav Chaim consoled her. "Raise the corner of your mattress and you will find the nose rings there."

Just as the Rav had suggested, Mrs. Buganim lifted her mattress and discovered all her nose rings there. (As heard from her son, Rabbi Chaim Buganim.)

A Pocketful of Blessing

R' Avraham Ali's aunt did not have any children for many years after her marriage. Broken in spirit, she came to Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's house, in order to receive his blessings.

The Rav asked her, "What do you have in your pocket?"

"A coin," she answered. The Rav asked her to hand it to him. He took the coin and placed it between his teeth. After a few moments, he told her, "Give this coin to tzedakah, and at this time next year you will have a son."

R' Avraham Ali relates that exactly one year afterward, his aunt gave birth to a boy, just as the Rav had blessed her.

Revealing the Secrets of the Torah

The great tzaddik, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Rabbi David Chazan, Rabbi Chaim's beloved friend, did not merit having children for many years. At every opportunity, he prayed to Hashem that He should merit having sons who would serve and fear Him.

His prayers bore fruit and after a period of time, to his immense joy, Rabbi David had a son. However, his joy was short-lived, since this only child died while still very young. The following tale is told describing the episode:

Rabbi David Chazan engaged in the study of Kabbalah, unveiling the secrets of the Torah. Once, while he was learning, his son, who was approximately seven years old at the time, approached him and began to learn with him the hidden mysteries of the Torah.

The young boy quickly grasped everything his father taught. Afterward, he proceeded to transmit the mystic secrets to his father's students (Shenot Chaim and Mekor Chaim).

From then on, all the people referred to the boy as "the prophet," because every word that he uttered was true. His father, Rabbi David, feared this development, and beseeched Hashem to cause his son to depart from the world, so that he would not frighten people by revealing to them what was on their conscience. His prayers were realized, and his son died at the height of his youth. He had exceeded his limits due to his lofty neshamah. He was buried in the cemetery of Mogador, near the place where Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol was eventually laid to rest (Shevach Chaim).