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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

The Merit of Our Holy Avot

"When Ya'akov finished instructing his sons, he drew his feet onto the bed; he expired and was gathered to his people" (Bereishit 49:33)

Chazal tell us that Ya'akov did not die in the literal sense, but was gathered from this world to the next, and as Rashi writes, "Death is not mentioned concerning him, and Chazal say (Taanit 5b) Ya'akov Avinu did not die". What this means is that Ya'akov Avinu left the world where he was living, and passed on to a world where there is a superior kind of life. This can be compared, l'havdil, to a person who changes his citizenship to that of a different country.

In light of the above, the following question arises: Why do people cry and mourn when someone passes away- they should feel happy that he moved from this temporary world to an Eternal World? It seems to be that the world mourns for we do not know if the niftar has enough merits to be allowed entry into Gan Eden. And when people cry for someone, this crying is l'ilui nishmato and has the power to act as an advocate for the niftar as he stands before the Heavenly Court.

The holy Avot, whose lives are described in detail in Sefer Bereishit, are distinguished for their exalted middot, which are a guiding light for their descendants and for all future generations. Avraham Avinu was outstanding in the attribute of chessed- lovingkindness. Chazal tell us that the tent of Avraham Avinu had four openings corresponding to all four directions, so that any passer-by could easily find his way into Avraham's tent. The Torah details at length how Avraham troubled himself and expended much effort on behalf of the three angels, despite feeling weak from his brit milah. This mitzvah was so dear to him, that we learn from Avraham this novel idea that hachnasat orchim takes precedence to receiving the Shechina, for he left the Shechina who had come to visit him, in order to receive his guests.

From Yitzchak Avinu we learn about true love of Hashem. He was ready to give up his life and be bound on the mizbe'ach (altar), for this was the will of Hashem. This is a lesson for us small people, to what extent we have to put in effort to fulfil the will of Hashem Yitbarach- a person must be willing to sacrifice his personal wishes for the sake of the will of Hashem. And if Yitzchak was willing to sacrifice his very life on the command of Hashem, all the more so must we be willing to give up our desires, the simple things that occur in our daily life, if they oppose Hashem's wish.

Ya'akov Avinu is the pillar of Torah. From Ya'akov we learn the extent of the devotion and toil that one must be prepared to expend for the holy Torah, for the Torah is our entire life and the source of a G-d fearing persons' existence. No excuse has the means to justify a slackening in Torah learning, for if not for Torah learning the life of a Jewish person is not fitting to be called life. Therefore we are obligated to cleave to the ways of Ya'akov Avinu who sacrificed himself in the tent of Torah, and we too must toil in our holy Torah in every situation, even if it

seems that in light of the difficulty one can make an exception and take a break from learning Torah. "Fortunate is the one who comes to shamayim with the Talmud in his hand."

Three times a day, in our prayers, we mention the Avot: "The G-d of Avraham, the G-d of Yitzchak and the G-d of Ya'akov". This is because mentioning them in tefillah serves to awaken us to think about their elevated middot and their way of life which was one long chapter of cleaving to Hashem Yitbarach with the utmost devotion. Also, by mentioning the Avot, we are asking that their merit protect us and they should advocate for us before the One who dwells on High.

It seems that the greatest praise for Hashem is mentioning His great children, our forefathers - Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. Mentioning their names is almost like a promise to Hashem that we wish to be like them and follow in their path, and when Hashem hears this He immediately feels great pleasure, for this is the greatest praise for Him - that His children wish to be like their forefathers. However, if a person mentions the Avot without intending to continue in their path, it can be compared to a person who meets his friends and greets him and at the same time strikes him on his face.

After completing Sefer Bereishit and allowing ourselves to become perfumed by the spirituality of the holy Avot, we go on to learn Sefer Shemot which tells about the slavery in Egypt, the redemption and finally the culmination - the receiving of the Torah. With this specific order of the sefarim, Hashem is teaching us that derech erez precedes Torah; in order to be ready and fitting to receive the Torah and fulfil its mitzvot, one must first learn from the deeds of the Avot. Only one who adopts the lifestyle of the Avot can be a suitable vessel for receiving the holy Torah.

One who doesn't put in effort to make himself into a suitable vessel for containing the Torah, cannot retain Torah and it will soon be forgotten from his heart. This can be compared to a person who holds on tightly to all the indulgences and gratifications of this world, while saying kaddish throughout the year for his relative who passed away. It is clear that at the end of the year, when he no longer has the obligation to say kaddish, he will return to his bad ways, for he didn't work on his middot and didn't prepare himself to receive the Torah, so the Torah is unable to remain with him permanently.

The most ideal thing to do l'ilui nishmat a niftar, is to accept upon oneself to improve in a certain trait, since if this effort is carried out with right intentions, it will eventually become part of one's personality and will not evaporate at the end of the year. This is the reason why we mention the holy Avot in our prayers. We are expressing to Hashem our strong desire to become like them and to follow in their ways, for it is only work on one's middot and self-improvement that has the power to enable Torah to establish itself in the person and find a fixed place in his heart.



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Hilula

14 - Rabbi Rafael Meir Panizhel, author of 'Lev Margeh'

15 - Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Rosenbaum, Admor of Nadvorna

16 - Rabbi Chaim Kreiswirth

17 - Rabbi Salman Mutzeff

18 - Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech Shapira, author of 'Bnei Yissachar'

19 - Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Binyomin Sofer, the 'Ksav Sofer'

20 - Rabbeinu Moshe Ben Maimon



Walking in their Ways

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

Jealousy, Lust and Honor

A man once approached me, and with righteous indignation, stated, "Rabbi David, I do not want so-and-so elected as president of our community! I will do everything in my power to ensure that he does not get this post."

"Why don't you want him to be president?" I asked.

"Because he attracts characters that I don't want here. He is ruining our good name. And he lords over others, to boot!"

"And what will you gain from this?" I persisted. "Do you, perhaps, want to be elected president instead of him?"

"Not at all," he replied, in mock humility. "I have no interest whatsoever in leading the community."

"In that case," I tried to mollify him, "look for another candidate who can take his place as president. Then come back to me."

The man was quiet for a moment, and then said, "That being the case, I am ready to make the sacrifice of offering my services as president of the community."

I looked at him in astonishment. "It seems that your entire objective in undermining so-and-so's position is in order to seize it for yourself. What type of sacrifice are you referring to? You know good and well that so-and-so is more fitting for the job than you. All of your grievances toward him are nothing but the rantings of a man riddled by the lethal character traits of jealousy, lust, and the pursuit of glory."

The man lowered his head in humility and agreed that it was honor which prompted him to think this way. The Mishnah in Avot (4:21) came to mind, "Jealousy, lust, and the pursuit of honor drive a man from this world." For the sake of honor, this man was ready to tear asunder an entire community!

A person would do well to analyze the motivations behind his acts. Is he motivated by personal interests or glory? When he takes up the banner of the public benefit, is it really the public good that drives him, or do feelings of personal pride play a role? One who seeks the truth will be assisted by Heaven to find it.

The Haftarah

"Kind David's days grew near to die" (Melachim I, 2:1)

The connection to the parsha: The haftarah tells about the death of David Hamelech a"h and his final instructions to his son Shlomo. The parsha speaks about Ya'akov Avinu's death and his testament to his son Yosef.



Guard Your Tongue

Lashon Hara through Deception

There are some ba'alei lashon hara who speak lashon hara in a back-handed way. For example, one who tells his friend that so-and-so invested a large amount of money in home-renovations. There are people who consider this as extravagant and wasteful yet other people don't see this as something negative at all. If he knows that the one listening has a negative perception of people who indulge in this way, yet he nevertheless relates this information while making as if he isn't aware of this, he has transgressed the prohibition of deceptively speaking lashon hara.



Words of our Sages

Turning to our Creator

"O G-d before Whom my forefathers walked" (Bereishit 48:15)

What is required from a person in order that he be crowned with the title of tzaddik? In general, what is the measuring stick by which we can determine the greatness of a righteous person?

Rabbi Eliyahu Diskin shlita, addresses these questions in his sefer 'Nachal Eliyahu'.

He quotes the words of the Gaon of Vilna, who in his work on the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, in the first section, gives a clear-cut answer.

The Rema writes: 'I place Hashem before me constantly' is an important rule of the Torah and in the loftiness of tzaddikim, who walk before Hashem.

The Vilna Gaon quotes several sources showing how our holy Avot behaved in this manner, and finishes, "and this is the entire advantage of tzaddikim".

The Vilna Gaon is telling us: Do you wish to know who is considered a tzaddik? One who constantly walks before Hashem; the awareness of Hashem's presence is firmly entrenched inside him at all times.

The greatness of the Avot was in the fact that they were a merkava (chariot) for the shechina, meaning they didn't let their minds wander for even one moment from the Creator of the world. At all times and in all places they maintained the awareness of "I place Hashem before me constantly".

How does one achieve this?

The Chazon Ish zt"l, once advised a yeshiva bachur on the way to form a constant connection with Hashem. This is what he told him: Accustom yourself to asking for everything, whether big or small. Turn to Hashem in every matter and ask for His help, and also thank Him. In this way your soul will absorb the feeling that you are constantly in Hashem's presence and that you are unceasingly dependent on Him.

It is especially important to turn to Hashem with slight concerns, with small matters that a person might think that in this area he can manage even without Hashem's help, chas v'shalom.

It is worth repeating a story that we have already quoted in 'Pachad David' several times. Chassidim once heard Rabbi Pinchos of Koritz zt"l, asking in the prayer of 'My G-d, guard...' that their maid shouldn't leave...

Certain that he was referring to lofty kabbalistic concepts, they approached him at the end of his praying and asked him to explain the underlying intentions of his words.

The tzaddik answered them frankly: "The maid that we employ wishes to leave just now when my wife is sick. Therefore I asked Hashem that the matter should be resolved in the best way."

Surprised by his answer, his chassidim probed further and asked: "For a small insignificant matter as this the Rebbe beseeches Hashem during the Amidah prayer?" He replied: "This is the reason why tefillah was established, so that one should ask for every single thing!"

Harav Dessler zt"l wrote an entire essay about the prayer of the Amidah being the time when we ask for lofty things such as wisdom, repentance and forgiveness, and suddenly right in the middle of those blessings, we find the blessing of 'Baruch Aleinu' - 'Bless on our behalf', where we are requesting a blessing for money and sustenance. He explains that the intention that lies behind all the requests is the same - we are asking for all the tools that we need to be able to serve Hashem.

A healthy relationship between a child and his father expresses itself in the feeling that he can approach his father even for insignificant things. It is the very same thing with our relationship with our Father in Heaven, Who is the address for everything.



Pearls of the Parshah

Exempt From the Blessing of 'Baruch Sheptarani'

"Then Yisrael saw Yosef's sons and he said, "Who are these?" And Yosef said to his father, "They are my sons whom G-d has given me here." (Bereishit 48:8-9)

Did Ya'akov really not recognize these children? Were they not his grandchildren who used to visit him regularly?

Rashi explains: "Who are these?" – who are not deserving of a blessing.

The question is asked, is this the way to confront a father who brings his children to be blessed? This is what one says about them to their father? The 'Kedushat Zion' of Bobov zt"l explains that when a child becomes bar mitzva, his father recites the blessing 'Blessed is the One Who freed me from the punishment due to this boy', for until now the boy's punishments and obligations were the fathers responsibility, and now that he has reached maturity, his father is absolved from his punishments.

This blessing is appropriate only in a case where the son has sinned, but if the child has merited observing Hashem's commandments, there is no place for this blessing for the father never had to be punished for the child's wrongdoings.

That is what Ya'akov was implying upon being faced with the holiness of Yosef's children and seeing that they had never sinned. He wondered and said, "Who are these?" for whom it is inappropriate that their father recite the blessing – 'Blessed is the One who frees...'

"And Yosef said to his father", Yosef added to their greatness by replying, "They are my sons whom G-d has given me here", meaning, they were born and raised right here in Mitzrayim, the land which is the source of all impurity, and despite these conditions they have remained righteous...

Aim for the Highest

"May G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe" (Bereishit 48:20)

We bless our children that they should become like Ephraim and Menashe, but we don't mention the other shevatim. The reason for this is that if one wishes to educate one's child in the ideal way, the priority is to educate him to be great in Torah. If he is not able to achieve this, then the father's goal should be to guide him to become a G-d fearing Jew who sets aside time to learn every day. Ephraim was the one who used to learn Torah with Ya'akov while Menashe stayed with Yosef and assisted him with the communal needs. Ya'akov placed his right hand on Ephraim even though he was the younger of the two, to show the significance of one who totally devotes himself to learning Torah.

The sefer 'Chochma v'Daat' points out that there is an important lesson in this for all generations: Chazal chose this specific wording for blessing our children, for the main thing that every father must know is that he must aim to educate his children to be like Ephraim; his entire occupation should be Torah. The father must invest much effort in this, and only if the child doesn't succeed, he should strive to be like Menashe in yirat shamayim, although his brother Ephraim is greater than him for he is the one who merits to constantly sit and learn.

The Choicest Sacrifice

"He saw tranquility that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, yet he bent his shoulder to bear and he became an indentured laborer" (Bereishit 49:15)

Common sense tells us that after seeing that tranquility is a good thing and that the land is pleasant – one would choose to rest, yet here it says the opposite, "He became an indentured laborer" – he went to work! What lies behind his choice?

The Admor of Ozrov zt"l once said to the Chazon Ish: "Our holy Torah commands us: "And you shall love Hashem your G-d". How does one love Hashem?

One of the ways is "with all your soul" (בכל נפשך). On the verse "If it is truly your will (nafshechem)" (Bereishit 23:8), Rashi writes: "Your nefesh: your desire". It is clear from this that a person's nefesh is his desires. Therefore, when the Torah commands "Love Hashem with all your soul (nefesh)", the intention is really- offer Hashem your desires.

This is what Yissachar did: "He saw tranquility that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant". He saw that tranquility is where his true desire lies, so he decided that this is what he is going to sacrifice for Hashem, therefore, "He became an indentured laborer".

Treasures

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



Emulating the Conduct of our Gedolim

"When Ya'akov finished instructing his sons, he drew his feet onto the bed; he expired and was gathered to his people" (Bereishit 49:33)

Chazal tell us that Ya'akov did not die in the literal sense, but he was gathered from this world to the next world, and as Rashi writes – "Death is not mentioned concerning him".

There are tzaddikim who despite living in our generation today, nevertheless possessed the distinguished characteristics of our holy Avot. One example is the tzaddik Rabbi Rafael Bardugo zt"l, the Av Beit Din of Essouira, who possessed these three attributes of Torah, tefillah and chessed, just as we saw with the Avot.

Even though his greatness and righteousness was clear to all, we mourned his death. Why? For "they travelled to their resting place and left us to our sighing"; his departure from this world left us stranded, confused and bewildered with the absence of our leader who was our guiding light. This is the reason why one is distraught when a tzaddik is niftar; not out of concern for him- he is certainly revelling in Gan Eden, but because of the lack that we feel down here in this world.

After the petirah of the tzaddik Rabbi Nissim Ravivo zya"א, many women were left with great uncertainty as to the true status of their possibly illegitimate children. Everyone cried bitterly for who would now take care of this matter and determine their status, for the good or bad? When we cry for a tzaddik, the tears are not for him- we are not concerned about his lot, we are worried about our own future – who now will be an advocate for us? Who will pray for us and help shoulder our concerns? Tzaddikim leave the world and go to their resting place, while we are left stranded.

When the tzaddik Rabbi Rafael Bardugo zt"l came to live in Eretz Yisrael, he could have been mistaken for a regular person by those who were unaware of his greatness, since he behaved with exceptional modesty. He accorded no significance to materialism and his entire life was exemplified by humility and self-effacement. This scarlet thread winds its way through the entire distinguished Bardugo family, especially manifest by his son shlita, the Av Beit Din of Netanya, Eretz Yisrael.

Concerning this tzaddik, Rabbi Rafael zt"l, one can certainly say that he is alive and did not die, just as it says about Ya'akov Avinu a"ח. Rather, he was only gathered to his people and continues to be an advocate for Am Yisrael, just as he was in his lifetime.

When Rabbi Rafael zt"l would appear in the palaces of kings and counts, his model behavior left a deep impression on all the elite personalities, and they expressed this by exclaiming about him, "Praiseworthy is the people for whom this is so, praiseworthy is the people whose G-d is Hashem".

This should be the goal of every Jew- to observe the tzaddikim of the generation and try to emulate their elevated middot, so that anyone coming into contact with a Jew who observes Torah and mitzvot will be most impressed, and this will cause a great Kiddush Hashem.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Potency of Prayer's from the Heart

"And as for me, I have given you Shechem – one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Emorim with my sword and with my bow" (Bereishit 48:22)

The Targum Unkelos translates the words "with my sword and with my bow" as "With my prayer and my request".

Rabbi Avraham of Sochashov zt"l explains:

Just as with the bow and arrow, the potency of the arrow is affected by the degree to which one stretches the bow, so too does this analogy apply to tefillah. When a person's heart is enveloped in pain, the more he begs and pleads intensely, to that extent his prayer will have the power to reach higher and higher and destroy all the partitions that are blocking the way to the salvation that he requires.

Let us fully utilize the power of standing before our Creator in prayer. We should beg and pray for everything that we need, from the depths of our heart straight to the heart of the One who loves us.



Men of Faith

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

More than I Received

Because of his responsibility in shouldering the tremendous expenses incurred when providing for the poor, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan suffered a financial crisis. What did the tzaddik do?

He went to prostrate himself over the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. Rabbi Chaim Hakatan took his attendant, R' Yehuda Ben Ezer, with him. When they finished praying at the grave, the Rav said to R' Yehuda, "Let us set out to the city of Safi."

On the way, they noticed a group of people approaching. The Rav turned to R' Yehuda and asked him if he saw the group. He answered in the affirmative, but was not sure if it was a group of Jews or not. The Rav told him, "It is a group of Jews, and one of them is bringing me a sum of seventy-five royal."

When the group came closer, Rabbi Chaim approached them and asked, "Who is Refael Lalush?"

"I am," answered one of the men.

"Give me the seventy-five royal that you pledged in honor of my grandfather the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim," the tzaddik demanded.

Refael Lalush took out of his pocket the entire sum and happily gave it to Rabbi Chaim. When the group left, R' Yehuda Ben Ezer asked Rabbi Chaim to allocate to him some of the money that he had received.

Rabbi Chaim told him, "I hereby bless you that you shall receive today more than I did." The blessing was fulfilled. R' Yehuda miraculously discovered a large sum of money in his horses' stable.

R' Yehuda Ben Ezer lived a long life, and he was honored by all the people of his city until his last day, just as the Rav had blessed him (Shenot Chaim).

The White Pigeons

Dr. Lawrence Lugasi, a native Moroccan who currently lives in Marseille, asked to speak with Moreinu v'Rabbeinu shlita, and tell him his personal story.

Dr. Lawrence is a doctor in Marseille, who was previously estranged from Torah and mitzvot. As a result of the following event, he returned to Judaism wholeheartedly.

Once, Dr. Lawrence traveled to Mogador in order to visit the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Lugasi, who is buried there. Before leaving Marseille, he promised his father that he would visit his grandfather's grave and even take a picture of it for him.

Upon arriving at the cemetery, Dr. Lawrence set out in search of his grandfather's grave. For hours he walked around the graveyard, and even enlisted the help of the caretaker, but could not find the grave.

During his frantic search among the thousands of graves located in the cemetery, Dr. Lawrence stopped to pray at the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. While standing at the holy site, he expressed his wish to locate his grandfather's grave and promised

that if he would, he would recognize Hashem's existence and do complete teshuvah.

When he finished his prayers, Dr. Lawrence looked up and noticed a large flock of pigeons in the distance landing on a certain grave. The unusual sight drew his attention, and he followed the birds to the grave. To his great surprise, as he approached the grave, the pigeons circling overhead flew away, except for one pigeon that remained perched on the tombstone.

As he strode toward the grave, the last pigeon also flew off. To his amazement, he found what he was looking for. It was the grave of his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Lugasi.

He realized that the tzaddik had helped him find his grandfather's grave, and as a result vowed to do complete teshuvah. He also promised himself that every year he would come to Mogador to the hilula of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim.

Dr. Lawrence was true to his word. He returned to his heritage and embraced Torah and mitzvot

wholeheartedly. Every year he travels to Mogador for the hilula of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol.

When Dr. Lawrence first met Moreinu v'Rabbeinu in Marseille, he prepared to tell him about the flock of pigeons descending over the grave of his grandfather in Mogador. However, before he had a chance to speak, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu noticed a huge flock of pigeons circling in the sky overhead...

Moreinu was very surprised and commented, "How wondrous are Hashem's ways. Hundreds of pigeons are flying in unison to satisfy the will of Hashem."

Dr. Lawrence was rendered speechless. He turned to Moreinu v'Rabbeinu and asked incredulously, "How did the Rabbi know that the pigeons directed me to my grandfather's grave in Mogador?"

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, who knew nothing about the pigeons in Mogador, did not understand what Dr. Lawrence was referring to. The wondrous ways of Hashem were impressed upon him by the good doctor's story.

As a postscript to this amazing story, Dr. Lawrence experienced another miracle. He was having an exceptionally hard time finding his match. In the merit of the tzaddik, on the day of the hilula, he found his true match in Mogador, ultimately, having the good fortune of marrying a religious, modest wife.

We can see from this how the tzaddikim are even more powerful in death than in their lifetime. Even after they pass away, they are capable of bringing people back to their heritage.

Every year on the hilula, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu asks Dr. Lawrence to repeat his amazing story, in order to arouse people to teshuvah. His story demonstrates that Hashem listens to the supplications of His people and does not disregard their pleas. Those who seek to be purified are assisted from Heaven. This story serves as proof, since as a result of these events Dr. Lawrence returned wholeheartedly to his Father in Heaven.