

Va'eira

January 5<sup>th</sup> 2019  
28<sup>th</sup> of Tevet 5779

782

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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

## Man was Created to Sanctify Hashem's Name

The Gemarah (Pesachim 53b) tells us: Todus, the Roman asked: What made Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya sacrifice themselves for Hashem's sake by entering the burning furnace? They made a 'kal v'chomer' (a fortiori argument) from the frogs. Concerning the frogs who are not commanded to make a Kiddush Hashem, it is written, "And they shall ascend and come into your palace...and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls" (Shemot 7:28); when are the kneading bowls found next to the oven? One must say when the oven is hot. How much more so is this demanded of us human beings, who are commanded to make a Kiddush Hashem...

One of the ideas behind the creation of animals was so that we take a lesson from them for our avodat Hashem. The gemarah tells us (Eiruvin 100b): R' Yochanan said: Had the Torah not been given we would learn modesty from a cat, vigilance from theft from an ant, morality from the dove and derech erez from the cock. In addition, Chazal tell us (Avot 5:21): Yehuda ben Tema said: Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven." Here we have two sources that show us how observing the behavior of animals can teach us how to serve Hashem. This is what Chananya, Misha'el and Azarya did. They learnt from the frogs about sacrificing one's life in order to sanctify Hashem's Name in this world.

However, we should not make the mistake of thinking that the main mitzva of Kiddush Hashem is to be prepared to give up one's life for the sake of a mitzva. On the contrary, a person, by his being alive, can sanctify Hashem's Name in this world through his deeds and behavior, if his actions proclaim Hashem's honor. If he excels in exemplary middot, behaves with derech erez and refinement, and his entire being portrays yirat shamayim, this is how he demonstrates to everyone how great the Torah is and how it has the power to refine a person's middot. It shows clearly that those who fulfill its commandments and follow its path reach a high level of integrity and morality, and that "Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace." One who takes this path merits sanctifying Hashem's Name and increasing His honor in this world.

Therefore it is extremely important for us to be aware that we, as bnei Torah, who hold aloft the flag of Torah and spend our days occupied with studying its ways, have been blessed with a special gift and fortunate are we who merited this. But on the other hand, a heavy responsibility rests on our shoulders which demands that we take great care. We are scrutinized by the world; they observe our behavior and

learn from our ways. Therefore, we must be careful to be stay away from any kind of confrontation chalilah, or slight argument between neighbors etc. which creates a terrible chilul Hashem. If from the frogs we learn about mesirut nefesh and the importance of sanctifying Hashem's name in this world, how much more so must we human beings avoid arguments and disputes and distance ourselves from improper behavior. If we merit making a Kiddush Hashem with our deeds, this will ignite in others the desire to follow in our footsteps.

This was the message that Hashem wished to pass on to Am Yisrael who witnessed the plagues in Mitzrayim - just as you observed the entire creation fulfilling My every will, so also you are obligated to fulfill My will. Even though now you are deep in the 49th level of impurity, however in a very short time you will be free men and will accept upon yourselves the yoke of Torah. Know that a tremendous mission is being placed on your shoulders - to sanctify My Name in this world, and just as you saw how the frogs performed My will and even sacrificed their lives by entering the burning ovens, so too should you learn from them to perform My will wholeheartedly and completely.

This was the entire goal of the miracles that were performed in Mitzrayim - to teach Am Yisrael how to serve Hashem, for the purpose of the liberation of Yisrael from Mitzrayim was not just to redeem them from the slavery. But, Hashem took them out after taking them through a detailed plan, so that they will accept upon themselves the yoke of Torah and mitzvot. This will be their occupation and through this they will sanctify His Name in this world.

A person will not be able to achieve this high level of sanctifying Hashem's Name if he himself is not holy and pure. First of all, he must fulfill (Vayikra 19:2) "You shall be holy", which the Ramban translates as, "Separate yourselves". He explains: Separate yourselves not only from forbidden things which the verse here does not refer to, but know to keep away from even permitted things and to indulge in them as little as possible and not be swayed by them. One who indulges is defined as a naval birshut haTorah, (a scoundrel within the limits of what the Torah permits). Instead, he should 'sanctify himself [by refraining] from the permitted' because only through absorbing holiness and guarding his eyes from improper sights, being careful where his thoughts lie and taking care with the purity of his speech, this is how he will sanctify his body and this holiness will endow him with the power and desire to sanctify Hashem's Name in this world.



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### Hilula

28 - Rabbi Channanel Nippi, author of 'Livyat Chen'

29 - Rabbi Yitzchak Kadduri

1 - Rabbi Moshe Shik, the Maharam Shik

2 - Rabbi Meshulam Zusha of Anapoli

3 - Rabbi Yosef of Amshinov

4 - Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov

5 - Rabbi Chaim Yeshaya HaCohen, author of 'Misgeret HaShulchan'



## Walking in their Ways

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

### For Your Miracles every Day

As a very young child in Morocco, I used to love to visit the port. I would spend hours watching the boats, the captains, sailors, and all the seamen. I loved observing the fishermen draw in their daily catch. I adored all things connected with the big, wide ocean.

Each boat had its own gangplank, which linked it to the land. These bridges were not very sturdy, especially as they were constantly being splashed by the water. They were wet and slippery and had to be traversed with caution.

On one of my many visits to the docks, when I was approximately ten years old, I decided to walk on one of these gangplanks. I didn't pay much attention to the danger involved, but let my youthful exuberance lead the way. Suddenly, I found myself under water.

Somehow, without knowing how to swim, I was miraculously saved from drowning.

At that moment, I was understandably frightened and confused. I did not sufficiently appreciate the open miracle which Hashem had performed for me. After I calmed down from this mishap, I continued in the regular routine of life. It was only years later, when I matured and gained intellect, that I recognized the miracle I had experienced. I thank Hashem, every moment, for the miracle of being delivered from drowning.

How often do we take for granted the myriad miracles which surround us each day! We are accustomed to Hashem's constant kindnesses, and they therefore seem insignificant in our eyes. But as one matures, he gains an appreciation for all of the goodness which envelops him. Then he has the tools with which to praise the Creator, Who takes care of all his needs, every moment of his life.



## Words of our Sages

### Nine Hours by Train

With the first three plagues with which the Egyptians were hit, we find that Ahron was the one who struck the River (blood and frogs) and the dust (lice). Rashi points out: "For the Nile protected Moshe when he was thrown into it, therefore it was not smitten by him not with the plague of blood and neither with the plague of frogs, and it was smitten by Ahron." This was also the case with the dust, as Rashi again points out: "It was not fitting that Moshe should smite the dust because it protected him when he killed the Egyptian and he hid him in the sand, and it was smitten by Ahron".

This subtle sensitivity demands an explanation: Water and dust are inanimate objects that don't possess feelings, how can one associate feelings of appreciation with them? In addition, the water and dust were anyway going to be smitten. If so, what difference does it make if it is smitten by Moshe or Ahron?

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler zt"l expounds on this concept, deriving a fundamental concept in middot. He explains that the idea of hakarat hatov (showing gratitude) is not only that the one who performed an act of kindness should be repaid, but the main intent is that the person to whom the favor was done should come to the realization that if he benefitted from someone, he should feel incapable of doing anything bad to this person who acted kindly towards him. If he acts against them, even if that person will never find out, this is nevertheless a flaw in the feeling of gratitude which should pulsate in him. Therefore, Hashem commanded Moshe that he should tell Ahron to smite the water and the dust and he himself shouldn't perform this act, in order to implant in him this idea that it should be beyond him to think of disregarding the good or repaying with a negative act.

The following story shows us to what extent Rabbi Dessler zt"l himself lived with this fundamental midda of hakarat hatov. Rabbi Meir Munk shlita related that during the war HaGaon Rabbi Eliezer Silver zt"l, the rabbi of Cincinnati, helped the Rabbi Dessler's son to reach America. Later on, Rabbi Dessler, was once visiting America and he decided to travel to Cincinnati to personally thank Rabbi Silver. The length of the journey was nine hours by train yet he made the effort and traveled. Just as he arrived, HaRav Silver left his home to go to the beit haknesset so Rabbi Dessler waited for him until he had finished praying. When HaRav Silver finished praying, he turned his attention to the rabbi. Rabbi Dessler told him that he had come to thank him for his tremendous help in assisting his son, and expressed the deep feelings of gratitude that he felt towards him.

HaRav Silver acknowledged this but then asked him, "But what do you want from me now? How can I help you?" He was certain that his thanks would be followed by an additional request for help. But Rabbi Dessler replied briefly, "I just came to say thank you"...

## The Haftarah



### "Thus said the Lord Hashem/Elokim" (Yechezkel 28)

The connection to the Parsha: the Haftarah speaks about the prophecies of the expulsion of the Egyptians and desolation of the land, and in the parsha we read about the punishments that the Egyptians received from Hashem, in the form of the ten plagues.



## Guard Your Tongue

### Including One's Wife

One must be very careful not to accept rechilut (gossip) from anyone, even from one's wife. If we think about this, we will realize that by accepting rechilut from one's wife, where she tells her husband that so-and-so spoke such and such about him – besides the actual sin of accepting rechilut, he brings great troubles on himself. If the wife sees that her husband accepts her words with equanimity, she will continue to recount these kinds of tales, and this will cause him much anger, heartache and contention.



## Pearls of the Parshah

### Create a Tangible Reminder

*“Only in the River shall they remain” (Shemot 8:5)*

Why did Hashem not perform an even greater miracle and remove the frogs from the Nile too?

It can be compared to a father who hits his son, and then hangs the stick on the wall in order to frighten him off from repeating his misbehavior, and through that saves him from further punishment.

The ‘Likutei Anshei Shem’ points out that that is what Hashem did by leaving the frogs in the Nile. The idea was that they should serve as a reminder for the Egyptians. This is also a way to be saved from hardship- to create a reminder of the ‘makot’, of one’s personal challenges, and to engrave them not only in our hearts but also on the wall itself...

One doesn’t need to travel to Egypt in order to be inspired by the enormous frogs that remained in the River, (Chazal tell us that each one can was able to swallow an entire chariot.) Each individual can create a tangible reminder for himself of the incidents that Hashem orchestrated for him, just as David HaMelech made a remembrance for the wonders of Hashem, by saving a piece from the fleece of the sheep that the lion devoured.

### Adding Sin on his Sins

*“He said to them, “This time I have sinned; Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones” (Shemot 15:12)*

Why especially with this plague did Pharoh deviate from his usual reaction and instead proclaimed: “Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones”?

The sefer ‘Latetcha Elyon’ explains why Pharoh admitted this truth after experiencing the plague of hail. Pharoh said, “Before smiting us with hail Hashem warned us to gather our livestock into the house, but I was wicked and not only did I not listen to Him, but I also threatened to punish anyone who would bring their animals inside.” (Meshech Chochma)

Here even the wicked Pharoh witnessed the extent of Hashem’s mercy on sinners and how much pity He has for them, and this brought him to realize how wicked he was, for not only did he not listen to Hashem’s request to let the Jewish people leave Mitzrayim, but he also did not heed the warning about the punishment.

### The Weather Forecast

*“The sons of Yitzhar: Korach, Nepheg, and Zichri” (Shemot 6:21)*

The sefer ‘Chemda Genuzah’ relates the following episode: Once merchants came to the Chozeh of Lublin zya”a, and told him that due to the extremely cold weather conditions they are unable to trade and therefore cannot provide for their households.

It was erev Shabbat Parshat Va’eira when they approached him. The Rebbe turned to them and proclaimed: “I have a proof of your imminent salvation from this week’s Parsha!”

It is written in this Parsha: “The sons of Yitzhar: Korach, Nepheg, and Zichri”, and this verse contains a wonderful hint. “The sons of Yitzhar (יצהר)” – this refers to Bnei Yisrael who spread light and visibility (מצהיר) like stars in the sky. “Korach (קרח)” – when the ground is covered with snow and frost (קרח), “and Nepheg (נפג)” – it will melt and disappear (יתפוגג) immediately, “and Zichri (זיכרי)” – it will be a remembrance for all future generations that that week will always be one of snow and freezing temperatures, but immediately following that, in the same week, it will melt and disappear...

## Treasures

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



### The Distinction in the Fourth Plague

With the plague of wild beasts, the Torah uses an expression that is not used by the other plagues – **“And on that day I shall set apart the land of Goshen upon which My people stands, that there shall be no swarm there;”** (Shemot 8:18).

The Jewish people did not suffer from any of the plagues. In the plague of blood the Jew and the Egyptian drank from the same cup. While the Jew satiated himself with water, that same water became blood for the Egyptian. Similarly with the plague of frogs and lice – millions of huge lice attached themselves to the bodies of the Egyptians, while in the houses of the Jewish people calm and tranquility reigned. So why does the Torah stress that Hashem set Goshen apart, specifically now when talking about the plague of wild beasts?

As part of nature, Hashem created the reality that man rules over animals - even the most cruel and dangerous ones. He possesses the power to frighten and alarm them. The reason is that man was created in the image of G-d and this can be perceived on his face. The animal that faces man sees this image of G-d on his face and immediately becomes afraid and flees. That is the nature that Hashem implanted in animals; they are fearful and wary of the image of Hashem in man.

But this idea is dependent on man taking care not to sin and guarding himself from anything improper. If a person chalilah defiles himself with sins and transgressions, these make a flaw in his neshama and distort the image of Hashem that is imprinted on his soul. Where the image of Hashem is covered over, the animals have no reason to be scared for the person himself is compared to an animal and even looks like one. This enables the wild beasts to have power over man and harm him.

When the Bnei Yisrael were in Mitzrayim, they created a deep blemish in their tzelem Elokim (image of G-d); they fell to an extremely low spiritual level, sinking to the 49th level of impurity, due to their many sins. So when the swarm of wild beasts arrived in Egypt, just as they tore at the flesh of the Egyptians, so too according to nature, they should have had power over Am Yisrael and not been afraid to devour them.

The evil Pharoh who understood this idea, rejoiced when Moshe Rabbeinu told him about this plague. He thought to himself, this plague will also harm the Jewish people who live in Goshen. Therefore specifically with this plague, Hashem came and told Pharoh that he should know that He will perform a miracle, something above nature, and He will separate Mitzrayim from Goshen. Even though now the Jewish people are similar to animals and according to nature the animals should be able to harm them, He will perform a wondrous miracle and will set Goshen apart so that the wild beasts should not enter that part of the land.



## Coiled in Suspense

After experiencing the plague of hail Pharaoh said: “This time I have sinned; Hashem is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked ones”. Just a few verses later we are told, “He continued to sin; and he made his heart stubborn”. How can this be? Pharaoh had just admitted that Hashem is the Righteous One? How quickly can he have a change of heart?

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, in his work ‘Michtav M’Eliyahu’ explains:

A person who only defers his evil inclination but doesn’t eradicate it, even though at the time he prevailed, can be compared to one who holds down a coil. The more force one applies, the more it objects and eventually when one releases the pressure, it retaliates and achieves the opposite effect.

This is what happened with Pharaoh. In reality he did not repent, he only postponed his inclination for some time and admitted the truth. Therefore his wickedness returned to him with a vengeance, and he hardened his heart once again with great obstinacy.



## Men of Faith

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

### In Casablanca

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan moved to Casablanca, from Mogador, in the last years of his life. He lived in Casablanca for over three years, and there he accomplished his main achievements, becoming famous worldwide for his righteousness, benevolence, and holiness. He was eventually buried in the Jewish cemetery there.

In the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, many other righteous Jews in Casablanca were accorded the honor and respect that they deserved. The Jewish population was situated mainly in the city and was cut off from the surrounding villages and settlements. With the arrival of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, the Jewish people recognized his worthiness, which brought them to believe also in the greatness and holiness of the other tzaddikim who lived in those outlying villages.

Moreinu v’Rabbeinu’s brother-in-law, R’ Pinchas Amos, relates an amazing story in connection to this:

It was the first time that his grandmother from Casablanca was going to request a blessing from Rabbi Chaim. She came to his house and asked him to give her a blessing. She also offered him a sum of money as a pidyon nefesh.

To her surprise, Rabbi Chaim refused to accept the money for the pidyon. “From you, I will not accept money,” he told her.

“Why not?” she dared to ask.

“Because you fast from Motza’ei Shabbat until Erev Shabbat, and you are held in high esteem in Heaven. Therefore, I do not want to take money from you. On the contrary, I want you to bless me.”

The words of the tzaddik, said in utmost modesty, greatly impressed the grandmother. She ventured to question the tzaddik, “From where does your honor know that I fast all week?”

“It was revealed to me by Heaven,” Rabbi Chaim answered her, “and therefore I will bless you, but I request that you bless me as well.”