



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"va

MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Amalek is the Symbol of the Evil Inclination (Yetzer HaRa)

"When Yitro, the priest of Midyan, Moshe's father-in-law, heard" (Sh'mot 18:1)

It says in the Prophets (Sh'muel 1:15) that Yitro and his family, who were called B'nei HaKeini, lived near Amalek. This is difficult. How on earth could Yitro go to live near Amalek? It is known that Amalek was the first one to dare come and fight with B'nei Yisrael. Although Amalek too surely heard of the wonders and miracles that were done for B'nei Yisrael, Amalek nevertheless, through its daring, cooled off the attitude towards fighting with B'nei Yisrael. Yitro was the antithesis of Amalek. Yitro forsook all worldly honour and came to the desert to join B'nei Yisrael and accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven upon himself. How then could Yitro go to live among Amalek when our Sages said (Masechet Avot 1:7) "Keep away from an evil neighbor and do not associate with a lawless man?"

We find that HaShem told Moshe at the event of Har Sinai to command Am Yisrael not to approach the mountain and not to touch even its edge. Moshe did as he was told. Nevertheless, Moshe was told to go command them again. Moshe replied that he had already told them. HaShem told him to tell them again anyway. Why did Moshe have to tell them again?

The idea is that the mountain symbolized the Yetzer HaRa, as our Sages said (Masechet Sukkah 52a) that in the future the Yetzer HaRa would seem to the righteous like a mountain. We learn from this that the Torah means to teach us that the Yetzer HaRa is very powerful, as the author of Chovot HaL'avot writes that our greatest destested enemy is the Yetzer HaRa. When we are asleep, it is awake. He tries to trip us up by all available means. If he does not succeed, he does not lose hope of succeeding at a later opportunity. This is the fiercest battle and it lasts for our entire life.

Why does the Torah mention that Moshe went up the mountain and that he came down the mountain? To teach us that the power of the Yetzer HaRa is great indeed and there will always be successes and failures. We must not let this scare us. We must be aware that this is the nature of the battle with the Yetzer HaRa; sometimes he wins and sometimes we win.

Therefore, HaShem said to Moshe that despite the fact that I commanded Am Yisrael not to touch the mountain, you should command them again to ensure that they do not transgress because the Yetzer HaRa is very strong and can cause them to stumble. They need to be commanded again and again so that they come to understand to be careful and distance themselves away from the Yetzer HaRa so that they will be out of range of a bowshot.

It is known what our Sages said, as Rashi quoted at the beginning of the Parashah, what did Yitro hear about that caused his spirit to be aroused to the point that he came to the desert to join Am Yisroel. They explained that he heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the War with Amalek. Now, the Splitting of the Sea was a great miracle, a supernatural event, where we literally see the providential Hand of G-d. Surely this can have caused his spirit to be stirred. But why did the War with Amalek cause him to be thus aroused?

Yitro saw how far Amalek deteriorated and to what great depravity he had reached. When Yitro saw that all the other gentile nations dreaded to approach Am Yisroel while Amalek feared not, Yitro realized to what extreme one could reach. Amalek heard about the miracles and wonders and remained unaffected. From this Yitro learned about the awesome control of the Yetzer HaRa. Therefore, it was the War of Amalek that so inspired him.

Even though it is important to stay far from an evil neighbor, in this instance Yitro felt it was crucial that he live close to Amalek so that he would always remember what inspired him so. This would constantly strengthen him during his entire life in his battle against the Yetzer HaRa.

We need to know that it is not easy to merit making Torah a part of us. It is only possible by waging a strong and perpetual war against the Yetzer HaRa. Because of this it is understandable why our whole Parashah is named after Yitro. We learn that when we merit to find something that brings us inspiration, we are required to make ourselves a reminder of that inspiration so that we can use it to continue to strengthen ourselves against the Yetzer HaRa.

The modus operandi of the Yetzer HaRa is to emphasize and embellish worldly and materialistic matters and to show how the pleasures of this world sparkle and glitter even though this is only external and does not reflect their intrinsic emptiness. It presents them as pleasing and attractive to the eyes and heart and causes us to be drawn after them. However, when it portrays Torah and mitzvot to us, it does not allow us to see how beautiful they are despite their resplendent inner nature. In order to have a true experience of Torah and mitzvot we need to taste them for ourselves, as it says (Tehilim 34:9) "Taste this for yourselves and you shall see how good HaShem is." It is not enough to have a look. The pleasure of Torah is not noticeable on the surface. We need to taste it for ourselves. Then we will feel and taste how good is Torah and mitzvot.

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	Hilula
20 - Rabbi Ovadyah Hodayah, author of Yaskil Avdi	
21 - Rabbi Yehudah Zev Segal, Manchester Rosh Yeshiva	
22 - Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the Saraf of Kotzk	
23 - Rabbi Yaakov Chayim Yisrael Alafia	
24 - Rabbi Shaul HaLevi Mortera, Av Bet Din of Amsterdam	
25 - Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant, Founder of Mussar Movement	
22 - Rabbi Yosef Berdugo, author of Shufre D'Yosef	



Walking in their Ways

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

To Feel the Pain of Another

When someone comes to me, presents his distressful situation and requests a blessing for Divine assistance from me – I try to imagine myself in his position and to feel as if his pain is my own, personal pain. In this way my prayer on his behalf wells up from the depths of my heart and I pray fervently for salvation and mercy for him, in the merit of my holy ancestors.

Once, when I was in Lyon, France, a woman turned to me for help. She was pregnant with twins. She recounted to me, crying and in pain, that the doctors strongly suggested that she abort the fetuses because of the danger facing them and her, may G-d have mercy.

She added that the fetuses were not progressing properly. However, providentially she did not emphasize to me the extent of the terrible danger the doctors prognosticated. I innocently thought that the danger was not so immediate and real. Therefore, I instructed her to ignore the doctors' opinions and not abort.

Six months of pregnancy passed and only then was I given to realize how enormous the danger to the woman was. However, by then it was too late to do anything about it. When I realized what the situation was, I contacted her and told her that she should put her trust in HaShem, G-d of Yisrael, and remove all worry from her heart. With HaShem's help she would experience incredible salvation.

How awesome was her faith in HaShem! With HaShem's kindness He accepted our prayers. She gave birth to healthy twins, free of any birth defect, against all the gloomy predictions of the doctors. Understandably, there was a fantabulous Kiddush HaShem.

Also in this case, when she had originally told me of her dire predicament, I felt a huge pain in my heart as if this difficulty was affecting one of my own household., as if she was my wife or daughter, G-d forbid. With this heartfelt feeling I presented my prayer before the Creator of everything from the utmost depths of my heart and beseeched Him to save her quickly. Blessed be His Glorious Name! She merited salvation and mercy.

So should everyone behave by joining in the sorry plight of his friend and sympathizing with his pain. This is the attribute of unity that all of us should feel like one man, with one heart. We should help and assist our friends for we are the children of one man and HaShem in Heaven is our Father, One G-d.

The Haftarah



"It was in the year of the death of King Uzziah" (Yeshaya 6).

The connection to the Parashah: The Haftarah describes the revelation of G-d's Holy Presence in the Bet HaMikdash in Jerusalem. This is similar to the events of the Parashah where is described the revelation of G-d's Holy Presence to every individual member of Am Yisrael during the Giving of the Torah on Har Sinai.



Guard Your Tongue

Leaving the Path of Tz'niut

There is behavior that is forbidden because it is Avak Rechilus, similar to Rechilus. For example, Reuven tells Shimon what Levi said about him. It does not have to be something truly disparaging. Even if it is just something that people are generally not excited to have said about them in their presence.

If Reuven confides in Shimon, Shimon must keep the information secret. Even if there is absolutely nothing derogatory about the information and thus sharing it with others is not Rechilus, since divulging the secret to others may be damaging to Reuven and might cause a disruption of his plans, this is a departure from the path of Tz'niut and by this Shimon goes against the wishes of Reuven.



Words of our Sages

What will Mashiach do with the New Train to Y'rushalayim?

A practical query crossed the table of HaGaon Rabbi Yitzchak Silberstein shlita.

In the month of Tishri, the masses began to travel on the new high-speed train to Yerushalayim and travel for the first three months was free. Unfortunately, the infrastructure work on the tracks was performed with blatant and disgraceful Shabbat desecration. My question was: Is it permitted to travel with such a train when its infrastructure was assembled through Shabbat desecration? Perhaps at this time, when the fares are free, it is permitted, because we are not paying them, whereas later when a ride will cost something, it will be forbidden? On the other hand, maybe it is forbidden immediately and we have to wait to board the train an amount of time equal to all the Shabbatot that they desecrated, as it states in Halacha, if someone performed forbidden labor on Shabbat, one must wait after Shabbat the amount of time equal to how long it would take to do the forbidden labor before deriving benefit from the forbidden labor.

HaRav Silberstein initially suggested that maybe there was room to be lenient in time of need because we do not know precisely to what extent the desecrated Shabbatot assisted the project's speed towards completion. It is possible that all the mishaps that occurred were due to having violated Shabbat.

"However," the Rav averred, "it is nevertheless proper for every G-d-fearing individual to refrain from traveling on a train whose rails were assembled publicly on Shabbat. Such a person is careful to guard the word of HaShem and is the crown of creation."

In any case, we must be aware that it is a desecration of HaShem's Name when Shabbat is violated publicly and nobody cares and they continue to travel as always. Now, every journey needs Heavenly mercy and a train rider will need to say Tefilat HaDerech. How can we ask for mercy from HaShem for a safe trip when the very tracks on which the train locomotes were put there through the disgraceful and public violation of Shabbat?

Regarding the recent rumours that the laying of the new tracks are somehow the "footsteps of the Messiah", the Rav pointed out that it is a gross error to think that constructing the train line to Yerushalayim is a sign of the approaching redemption! How is it possible to imagine that we will travel to our holy and glorious Bet HaMikdash on a train that was constructed by violating Shabbat publicly?! It is quite possible that when our righteous Mashiach will finally arrive to redeem us, these repulsive tracks will be destroyed. (Kol Berama, Kislev 5779)



Pearls of the Parshah

How Could B'nei Yisrael Eat on Yom Kippur?

"It came to pass on the morrow" (Sh'mot 18:13)

According to Rashi, the day meant here is the day after Yom Kippur. Our Rabbis, the authors of Tosafot (in Daas Z'kenim), find this idea difficult. If that is correct, then the day that Moshe descended from Har Sinai, i.e. Yom Kippur, they went to greet his father-in-law. But about that day the Torah writes, "Yitro dedicated to HaShem an elevating offering and offerings to be eaten." Therefore, they must have eaten on Yom Kippur. Since the Torah was already given, how could they possibly have eaten on Yom Kippur?!

Many solutions have been offered by the medieval and more recent commentaries.

Rabbi Yaakov Chagiz zt"l (Halachot K'tanot 2:135) explains that there was absolutely no place for self-affliction on that day. Our Sages have demonstrated (Masechet Brachot 8b) that one who eats and drinks on the 9th of Tishri is given the credit as if he had fasted on both the 9th and 10th of Tishri, for preparation for a great matter is also considered as righteous.

Therefore, one must receive an awesome and monumental day like Yom Kippur with overwhelming joy because of what is meant to be achieved on that very day. It is a day of atonement and there is no greater rejoicing than when we are immaculate before G-d.

That is why when they completed the building of the first Bet HaMikdash and the sacrificial altar, they ate and rejoiced on Yom Kippur because they already achieved atonement through its building and by bringing Korbanot there. So too, on the Yom Kippur that Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Har Sinai with the Torah they surely did not fast, for who could tell them to fast. Also, Moshe did not descend earlier because on that very day HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, "I have forgiven them as you requested."

Not to be Alarmed by Difficulties in Learning

"They journeyed from R'fidim and came to the desert of Sinai, and had encamped in the wilderness; and there Yisrael encamped before the mount." (Sh'mot 19:2)

The author of the holy Or HaChayim, writes that the Torah hints to us here about the three main points of preparation and introduction to receiving the Torah:

- 1) "They journeyed from R'fidim." We must leave the aspect of weakness behind. We must not learn Torah with laziness.
- 2) "They encamped in the wilderness." We must study with humility, like a desert that everyone walks on.
- 3) "There Yisrael encamped before the mount." "Encamped" is written in the Hebrew singular form. They encamped there like one man with one heart. We must study Torah in a group with geniality to each other.

When the holy Or HaChayim discusses laziness in the study of Torah, he explains that such an attitude does not only affect adversely the quantity, that he learns less material. It also unfavorably impacts the quality of the Torah that he has already studied. Just as bad weeds damage a field, so laziness damages and causes a loss in the attainment of Torah knowledge.

The holy Or HaChaim reminds us here of what he wrote in his holy and awesome book "Chefetz HaShem". There are those who seek to learn Torah in a superficial manner or to study easier material, or when they encounter a difficult topic they lose the patience to dwell upon it because they do not want to strain their body or intellect. The Torah becomes for them a poison for just as they seek to spare themselves the exertion of toiling in the study of Torah, measure for measure, their bodies become weak with sicknesses, may HaShem save us.

HaShem Answers Someone who is Close to Him

"You should not make anything to be with me; gods of silver and gods of gold" (Sh'mot 20:20)

Rabbi Avraham HaKohen zt"l of Tunis, in his book "Avraham Yagel", explains that this verse comes to warn the holy nation of Yisrael to attach themselves to pure love of G-d so that HaShem will be close to them whenever they call out to Him in their sorrow and He will respond favourably to them.

However, if G-d forbid, they are far from serving HaShem, He will distance Himself from them and will not respond approvingly to their prayers. It will then seem as if He does not hear their prayers, G-d forbid.

This is what the verse means, "You shall not make Me into gods of silver and gold", who cannot see and cannot hear.

Treasures

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



Rabbi Chayim Pinto Rebukes One Who Mocks believing the Sages

I thought that Yitro's opportunity to advise Moshe Rabbeinu stemmed from the fact that when he heard about the miracles and wonders that HaShem did for Yisrael through Moshe His faithful servant – he immediately fortified his heart with complete faith in HaShem and His servant Moshe.

If so, it is a solemn obligation for every Jew to believe in the power of the righteous people that HaShem planted in every generation who have the capacity to effect salvation and to bring about rescue and relief. As the verse says, "they trusted in G-d and in Moshe His servant," the Torah compares belief in HaShem to belief in Moshe's prophecy, to teach that one who believes in Moshe's words, in the righteous one of the generation, it is as if he believes in HaShem.

At the yearzeit celebration that we arranged (in 5771) for the holy tzaddik and miracle worker, Rabbeinu R'fael Pinto zta"l, I told the thousands of participants a wondrous story that occurred in the merit of the holy tzaddik. After the celebration, a dear Jew called Mr. Sh'lomo Moyal approached me and told me with much pain that a father and son sat next to him as they all listened to my words. The father showed disbelief of my story and told his son mockingly and derisively that such a story is impossible to have occurred, it is obviously irrational to believe it, and the whole story is nothing but a fantasy woven from a hyperactive imagination, may G-d save us.

On the morrow of the celebration the father excitedly contacted Mr. Moyal and told him, "I must meet Rabbi David shlit"l urgently and beg heartfelt forgiveness for discrediting his words and expressing skepticism in the ability of the tzaddik."

Mr. Moyal demanded to know how he arrived at the correct conclusion that his attitude was wholly improper, and this is what he said.

"After the celebration, I returned home and went to bed. Rabbeinu Chayim Pinto zta"l appeared to me in a dream with his cane in hand and rebuked me irately – How I was not ashamed to be skeptical of the power of the tzaddik. Then Rabbeinu took his cane and began to beat me severely on my legs. When I awoke from my sleep in terrible fright, I immediately noticed the signs of the dreadful blows that I suffered and I felt terrible pains, as if I had experienced the thrashing literally and not merely in a dream."

This is the penalty for someone whose faith in the tzaddik is weak. From here we learn how much caution is required in this area. Faith in the tzaddik is equal to faith in G-d. Just like Yitro and B'nei Yisrael believed in HaShem and Moshe His servant, so it is incumbent upon every Jew to strengthen themselves in complete and perfect faith in HaShem and His faithful servants who do His bidding.

May it be His will that the holy path of Yitro should be a guide for us. Just as he drew near to HaShem with all his might, so too we should draw close to fulfill His Torah and keep His commandments all of our days, for our own good, Amen.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



The Place Influences the Person

“They went into the tent. Moshe related to his father-in-law all that HaShem had done” (Sh’mot 18:7-8)

The Midrash says that Moshe brought Yitro to the Bet HaMidrash to draw him close to Torah.

Why did Moshe need to relate to Yitro all the miracles that HaShem had done for them, especially in the Bet HaMidrash?

There are two solutions to this question:

1) A holy place has the greatest influence. Saying holy things in a holy place will then become buried deep in Yitro’s consciousness.

2) Moshe brought Yitro into the Bet HaMidrash and told him everything that HaShem did for them. Thereby he wanted to teach Yitro that these stories are not just historical accounts but they are themselves real Torah!



Men of Faith

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

The Sale

A Moroccan Jew owed the government a large sum of money. After repeated warnings from the government to pay his debt immediately, it was decided to impound his house.

This was scheduled to happen on Friday. On Thursday, the man lit a candle for the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan’s soul and prayed to Hashem from the depths of his heart that in the merit of the tzaddik, he should find a buyer for his house immediately, so that the government should not be able to confiscate it, since it would no longer belong to him.

The merit of Rabbi Chaim stood in his stead. Barely an hour afterward, a serious customer arrived at his house and ended up buying it for the full price. Thus, the government could not impound the house on Friday.

If the government would have seized possession of the house, they would have auctioned it off at a cheap price. It was a miracle that he was able to sell the house before the government seized it. This way he was able to receive the full value of the house. He quickly paid his debt, and

was even left with a substantial amount of money for himself. This was all in the merit of the tzaddik.

Safe Landing

A man who was afraid of flying was once traveling by plane from Montreal to Miami on business. Suddenly, the pilot ordered all the passengers to buckle their seatbelts, since there was a storm in Miami with heavy rain, thunder, and strong winds. The situation was perilous.

The man was very frightened and began to pray to Hashem that the plane should land safely in the merit of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. In the end, the plane landed successfully.

The man relates that after the landing, the pilot announced in amazement, “I cannot understand how I managed to land safely. I was informed by the control tower that there was a problem, and I myself noticed the danger. However, suddenly all the danger signals disappeared, as if there had been no problem at all.”

This is the power of faith. What a pilot cannot do, an ordinary Jew can accomplish with simple faith and prayer.