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Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Prineï David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • Fax: +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



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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

Is It Possible For a Human Being to Be Holy?

"You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d" (Vayikra 19:2)

Chazal, in 'Torat Kohanim', define the words "you shall be holy" as "you shall abstain". In parshat Shemini we are told (Vayikra 11:44), "You are to sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy, for I am holy". Once again, the 'Torat Kohanim' defines for us the meaning of the words "for I am holy": "Just as I am holy so you should be holy, just as I abstain so you should abstain."

This explanation of the Midrash needs some clarification. For how can man, flesh and blood, a totally materialistic being, endeavor to reach this supreme level of holiness that describes the King of kings, who is surrounded by angels and tarshishim who tremble and entreat before Him? Doesn't the evil inclination dwell in man's heart, lying in wait to make him stumble at every step? With all his might he incites a person and tries to push him onto the path of evil. Is it possible that despite all the challenges and struggles that stand in a person's path, he can succeed in achieving these extremely high and elevated levels of holiness? "Just as I am holy..." How can we be compared to the Creator of the world?

Chazal expound on the verse, "shall every tongue swear" (Niddah 30b): "This refers to the day of birth when a person is made to swear - be righteous and don't be wicked. And even if the entire world tells you that you are righteous, consider yourself as wicked, and know that Hashem is pure and His servants are pure and the soul that He placed within you is pure. If you safeguard its purity, all is good, and if not I will take it from you."

Isn't this oath based on a false conception? Does a person know what awaits him when he arrives in this world? Does he know what difficult challenges are waiting for him in this world, as he encounters the yetzer hara? He is now safely in the upper worlds, worlds that are free of any trace of evil and where the evil inclination has no power. Over there, he is certain that to be a tzaddik and not wicked is something simple, and he is even prepared to take an oath on this. But once he arrives in this world and comes face to face with arduous challenges, won't he immediately regress and regret his oath? He did not know in advance that he would have to fight this battle with the yetzer hara?

With siyata dishmaya, I would like to suggest that when a person is still up there, before his entry into this world and even before his oath, he is shown all the maladies of this world and all the challenges that this world presents, and he is taught that a difficult battle awaits him. Only then is he made to swear. So in fact, he knows exactly what the promise involves and what he is about to face; this then cannot be considered as a false promise.

He is required to promise specifically when he is still in the upper worlds, in a place that is enveloped in holiness and purity, free of any trace of impurity, so that at the time of his oath he is soaking up the holiness which is present and through absorbing immense capacities of holiness from the upper worlds, this will enable him to live his life with holiness and to handle life's challenges which stand in his path.

Already when he is in the upper worlds, even before he enters this world, Hashem endows him with all the necessary strength to be able to challenge the yetzer hara, and in this place he charges his batteries with reserves of holiness and purity. Therefore when a person arrives in this

world, he is already equipped with all the spiritual and holy sustenance which he requires, and this is the weapon that he will employ against the yetzer hara. With this treasure house he has the power to be true to his oath, for a person is not challenged with difficulties that he does not have the power to withstand.

This is what Chazal (Baba Metzia 107a) were referring to when they expounded on the verse, "Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out." Just as your entering this world is without sin so your leaving this world is without sin." It is demanded from a person that just as he arrives in this world steeped in upper-world holiness and imbedded with supernatural strength - he must take care not to lose these powers, and should leave this world with the same degree of holiness with which he arrived.

This is why Hashem commands a person: "You shall be holy, for holy am I" (Vayikra 19:1). The intention is not that a person should be as holy as Hashem, for this is something that is not possible to achieve. But the meaning is that a person should remain just as holy as he was before he arrived in this world - when he was standing before the Throne of Glory, absorbing holiness and purity. And if a person maintains this holiness, Hashem will increase this holiness from His own holiness, as it says, "I am Hashem, who sanctifies you" (Vayikra 20:8). It is not hard for a person to grasp the meaning of this holiness, for this very holiness is what he absorbed before he came down to this world, and he has these powers deeply rooted in him. Heaven demands from him that since he stood and swore before Hashem that he will be a tzaddik and not a rasha, if so he must guard this holiness carefully and take care not to lose it. He must use these strengths to fight an all-out battle with the yetzer hara and overcome him, and through this he will merit eternal life.

This, then, is the command of "You shall be holy", that Hashem requests of man.

The holy Zohar tells us that all the mitzvot that Hashem gave us are the means to achieving the quality of holiness. If so, a person has the ability to guard this wonderful holiness and the matter is dependent on him, for he was given all the tools that he requires for this task.

Following this command of being holy, we are told, "Every man: Your mother and father shall you revere" (Vayikra 19:3). The question is, what is the connection between the verse that talks about fearing one's parents and the command of "You shall be holy"?

I would like offer the following answer: As we know, "The deeds of the forefathers are symbolic for the children", and the way in which a person behaves forms a path which his children follow. It is the way of a child to copy his father's conduct and learn from his deeds. Therefore the Torah commands us that a person should know that if he behaves with holiness and purity - this holiness will automatically be passed on to his offspring, for the main means of education is through children observing the conduct of their parents. Therefore the command "You shall be holy" is followed by "Every man: Your mother and father shall you revere", to indicate to the parents that their children will also merit this holiness.



Walking in their Ways

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

Salvation in the Merit of Faith

When I was once in Miami I received an alarming phone call. Most distressed, the caller, a family member of Rabbi Menachem, who is a dear and very close friend of mine, informed me that Rabbi Menachem is sick and has been flown to New York for emergency medical treatment. Being unaware of the seriousness of the situation, I encouraged the caller, "Don't worry, nothing is wrong and with Hashem's help everything will be ok."

A few days later, I once again received an urgent call from one of the family members. This time it was the daughter of the sick man. With a broken heart and terribly distraught, she told me how the results of the tests left no room for doubt, they clearly show a cancerous tumor in his brain and his situation is extremely serious...

In her great pain she turned to me and said "Is the Rav lying?! How can the Rav say that nothing is wrong, that he is healthy?! The Rav is not aware of the severity of his condition."

I placed my trust in Hashem Yitbarach and in the merit of my holy ancestors, and replied: "Do not worry! He will regain his former strength and health, and his situation is not as dire as the doctors predict." As I said these words I thought in my heart, Hashem is the biggest doctor and for Him it is indeed 'nothing'.

I was informed that Rabbi Menachem was about to undergo a most complicated operation, which the doctors estimated would take eighteen hours. I decided to fly to New York to be with him, encourage him and pray for him.

When I arrived at the hospital I was met by all the family members. Suddenly R' Menachem's personal assistant approached me with a severe look on his face. "Honorable Rav, you should know that the situation of this

sick man is critical. In a few moments he is about to undergo an extremely complicated operation, and the chances of his recovery are slight. I am surprised that you can promise the family that he is fine and does not have any medical problem?"

At that moment my heart began to race, and I could literally feel "A sound! My Beloved knocks!"... I understood that his condition was really not simple, yet on the other hand both the family and the doctor are under the impression that I am not taking it seriously. From the depths of my heart I offered up a silent prayer to Hashem that I should not be shamed, and that my supplication for his recovery, in the merit of my holy ancestors, should bear fruit and Hashem's name should be sanctified in the world.

Encouraged by these thoughts, I turned to the doctor: "With G-d's help he will survive and regain his health and live a good life". I sincerely believed every word that I uttered.

Eight nerve wracking hours passed outside the operating theatre, difficult hours during which I fused all my thoughts to believing in Hashem and in his servants the tzaddikim, with pure faith in His salvation. Suddenly – the doors opened and the doctors approached us with unconcealed excitement. They were delighted to inform us that with *siyata dishmaya* the operation was successful and R' Menachem's life was no longer in danger!

David Hamelech a"h wrote (Tehilim 32:10): "But as for one who trusts in Hashem, kindness surrounds him". If a person believes in Hashem with complete faith and trusts in Him with his entire heart, relying on His many kindnesses, he is promised that he will not be turned away empty-handed.



Words of our Sages

Directing the Clouds

"You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d" (Vayikra 19:2)

What, in actual fact, is this quality of holiness?

The Malbim defines this concept with the following powerful words:

"Holiness is abstention and elevation above all ways of materialism and nature...and the holiness which is said about Hashem, is that He acts towards mankind above the normal way of nature, in a miraculous and wondrous way and revokes and annuls the power of nature and its ways."

How can we achieve this level of annulling the powers of nature? Chazal reveal to us the wondrous key; it is called *mesirut nefesh*.

The Gemara (Berachot 20a) tells us about Rav Papa who asked Abaya: "What is the difference between the earlier ones who merited miracles, and we who don't see miracles?" He was answered that everything depends on the degree of *mesirut nefesh* that we display in performing Hashem's will.

There is a famous story told about the holy Baba Sali zt"l: One motzei Shabbat when the congregation went outside to sanctify the new moon, they discovered that the sky was overcast and the moon was totally obscured. All those present looked towards the tzaddik to see what he would do.

Suddenly, the tzaddik took his stick, waved it to the right and then waved it to the left. And wonder of wonders: the clouds moved aside and they were able to sight the moon! They were now able to fulfill the mitzva of sanctifying the New Moon.

Turning to the tzaddik, they asked him in surprise, "Does the Rav have power over the moon?" The Baba Sali replied, "This act that you witnessed did not begin in Netivot, its roots were planted in far off Lyon, in France." And this is the story that he told:

"Once when I was in Lyon, it was time to bless the new moon, but it was impossible due to the thick clouds. The situation repeated itself for several nights until the last opportunity for sanctifying the moon arrived, and still the sky was overcast.

The townspeople told me that if I wish to sanctify the moon, my only option is to travel 380 kilometers to the town of Marseille, and there I will be able to perform the mitzva.

Without further ado, I packed my bags and travelled to Marseille in order to sanctify the moon."

Just to give you some idea, the distance between Lyon and Marseille, is about the same distance as from Bnei Brak to Eilat.

Indeed the Baba Sali could have decided that it was too difficult and he was not required to travel all the way until Marseille. But instead, he went to great lengths and was *meser nefesh* in order to fulfill this mitzva.

One who sacrifices for the sake of fulfilling a certain mitzva, acquires, to a certain extent, power over that mitzva article, and then at a later time when he wishes to sanctify the moon in Netivot down in the south, yet the sky is overcast, he is given the possibility of moving the clouds aside. All this is due to that *mesirut nefesh* which took place prior to this story.

Guard Your Tongue

Two Sins; One Conversation

Both the one who speaks *lashon hara* and the one who accepts the *lashon hara*, have transgressed the Torah commandment "Hashem, your G-d, you shall fear" (Devarim 6:13). This is the mitzva to fear Hashem and not transgress His will by doing *aveirot*.

In addition, they have also both transgressed the mitzva of Torah study, for during this time they should have been learning Torah, and the punishment for neglecting this mitzva is equal to all the sins together.



Pearls of the Parshah

For Whom Do the Angels Wait?

"You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d" (Vayikra 19:2)

Rabbi Ya'akov Abuchatzera zya"a, in his sefer 'Petuchei Chotem', uses this verse as an allusion to the fact that the angels do not recite Kedusha (Sanctification) in the heavens above until Yisrael recite Kedusha down below. If Yisrael who recite Kedusha, are not holy and pure themselves, they will not be able to recite Kedusha with their mouths, for this will only be mockery and scorn. And the angels, who are waiting to hear Kedusha from Yisrael, will accuse them chalila and say, Master of the World, for these people we are waiting until they recite Kedusha?

Therefore Am Yisrael must take care to be holy so that they will be fitting to recite Kedusha, and then following their recitation the angels will be able to recite their Kedusha.

This is what the verse is referring to: "You shall be holy" - sanctify yourselves with holiness and purity, "for holy am I, Hashem". Both the upper and lower ones need to sanctify Me, and the angels are waiting for Yisrael until they recite Kedusha first.

The verse ends with the word 'אלקים', and this hints to the words אך הם (they should sanctify themselves for the angels are waiting for them). If you take the first letter of each word and rearrange the letters, they form the word אלקים (your G-d).

The Rich Are a Pipe for the Righteous

"You shall not cheat your fellow and you shall not rob" (Vayikra 19:13)

Who is this 'fellow' that the Torah warns not to cheat, and why especially about him is this warning said?

Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Atar zya"a, the 'Ohr Hachaim', explains that in this command lies a reference to the Chazal which says that those who study Torah do not have parnassah in this world, as it says (Yalkut Mishlei siman 934): The Torah asks why are there poor people? And the reason is, I heard in the name of the Arizal, that the world cannot bear the immense good which was intended for the righteous, so Hashem only bestows on the mediocre ones, and through them those who study Torah will receive their sustenance.

This teaches us that the rich are only a supply system which is put in place in order to meet the needs of the righteous. Hashem commanded not to cheat one's fellow, which refers to the righteous person, as it says in Tehillim (122:8), "For the sake of my brethren and my comrades, I shall speak of peace in your midst". If the rich does not give the righteous his portion, he is considered as openly cheating him.

The Secondary Rule and the Fundamental Rule

"You shall love your fellow as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18)

The 'Yesod Tzaddik' tells over that once Rabbi Shlomko of Zvhil turned to his shamash Rabbi Elya Roth, and asked him to explain the famous words of Rabbi Akiva, "You shall love your fellow as yourself is a fundamental rule in the Torah".

If Rabbi Akiva called it a 'fundamental rule', this is a sign that there is also a 'secondary rule'; what is this other imperative?

Rabi Elya was quiet and waited for his Rebbe to explain and this is what he said:

If, for example, you hear that a famous etrog merchant earned a huge profit through selling etrogim, the secondary rule would be that you should not be jealous of his success, for "What is hateful to you, do not do to others" (Shabbat 31a), whereas the fundamental rule would be that not only should you not feel bad about his profit, but you should even rejoice as if you yourself had earned this money. This is the fundamental rule of love your friend as yourself!

In Our Fathers Footsteps

Nuggets of guidance culled from the teachings of Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit'a, on masechet Avot



"All Israel has a share in the World to Come"

We start learning Pirkei Avot following the festival of Pesach. Several reasons are given for this which we will not delve into at present.

We need to clarify why Chazal established to learn the above maxim, which is taken from the mishna in Sanhedrin 90a, as an introduction to each chapter of Pirkei Avot.

I would like to suggest that our Chachamim wished to teach us the severity of matters between man and his friend, which in a certain aspect are more severe than matters between man and G-d. When Adam Harishon sinned against Hashem and then repented, Hashem was appeased, but if man sins against his friend, even if he repents he is not forgiven until he appeases his friend (Yuma 85b).

This is what Chazal which to teach us here - that a person must take more care with matters between man and his friend than with matters between man and his Creator. From the form of their atonement we learn about the severity of these sins. If man repents, Yom Kippur atones for sins between man and his creator. However, one who sins against his friend, even if he repents and admits his wrongdoing, this will not help. The day of Yom Kippur does not atone for him until he approaches his friend and appeases him.

From here Chazal established that if a person wishes to merit the portion that is prepared for him in Olam Haba, he must first of all perfect his middot and be careful with matters between him and his friend, for if he doesn't know how to interact with others, he may chalilah lose his portion in the World to Come.

How do we achieve perfection in middot?

Through studying Pirkei Avot, where with exceptional wisdom the Chachmei Yisrael laid out the foundations for us, we will learn how to improve and correct our middot so that we should be fitting to merit eternal life.



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'

In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

To what are tzaddikim compared?

The Meiri writes (beg. of Pesachim) that tzaddikim are compared to stars, as it says (Daniel 12:3), "Those who teach righteousness to the multitudes [will shine] like the stars, forever and ever". This means that just as with stars, their brightness cannot be discerned during the daytime but only at night, so too with tzaddikim, the full brightness and glory of their brilliance is only recognized once they leave this world, for when a tzaddik is niftar the sun is extinguished at noon and the world grows dark. Then his true status emerges and he becomes famous in the world and his honor grows in the eyes of the people and his brilliance glows like stars that shine in the darkness.

This is how we can define the esteemed Rabbanit, mother of royalty and righteous wife of the honorable Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zya"a, who was taken from us after a long life, in which she was blessed with many generations of blessed and upright children who support the three pillars on which the world stands- Torah, prayer and acts of kindness.

Due to her exceptional modesty, during her lifetime not many merited a glimpse of her outstanding personality, her middot and her many good deeds which she performed for the sake of increasing the honour of Hashem in this world.

This is how her son, , our esteemed master and teacher Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, expressed it in his hesped: "Ima the tzaddeket, prepared herself throughout her life for her passing to the World of Truth. Ima a"h understood that only one who prepares on erev Shabbat will have what to eat on Shabbat, therefore she performed many righteous deeds and constantly grew in holiness and purity, in her tzniut, middot tovot, chessed and loving others. The strength of her emunah and bitachon in Hashem was exceptional and her meticulousness in performing mitzvot was impressive.... and now that you went to your final resting place, suddenly your light shines like a star and everyone is praising and commending your qualities and good deeds."

In this column, a tribute to the esteemed Rabbanit, we will attempt to portray sketch an outline of the true 'eshet chayil', woman of valour, and shed light on the Jewish outlook of the distinguished role of the Jewish woman, the mainstay of the home, the joyful mother of children. It is she who merits the admirable description expressed by David Hamelech, "and let her be praised in the gates by her very own deeds".

"An accomplished woman who can find? Far beyond pearls is her value"

In this mizmor, Shlomo Hamelech, cleverest of all men, portrays the Jewish woman who merits the description of "eshet chayil" (accomplished woman). The backbone of a woman is her accomplishments; the intense zeal and all-encompassing efforts that she invests in raising her children, and her devotion to fulfilling both their physical and emotional requirements.

'Eshet chayil' is synonymous with alacrity. The attainments that describe the 'eshet chayil' all relate to the toil and effort that she invests in her home. "She stretches out her hand to the distaff, and her palms support the spindle... She made for herself luxurious bedspreads...She makes a cloak and sells it...Strength and majesty are her raiment".

The ideal woman does not know of fatigue- neither by day nor by night; this is the splendour of the authentic Jewish woman. She is the one who packs up nourishing food for her children, sweetening their departure as they leave to their places of Torah study. She is the one who repairs her children's clothing late at night so that when they awaken from their slumber they will have all that they need. She is the one who accompanies them with her prayers, her supplications and her tears. She is the one who receives them joyfully on their return, and she is always ready with a listening ear to hear their tales and chatter. Towards evening as tiredness overcomes her, she nevertheless sits by their side, inspiring her children with stories of tzaddikim. She reads the kriyat shema with them and rocks their cradle to the tune of songs of Torah, until they fall into a peaceful sleep. And in the stillness of the night, she awakens to prepare provisions for the new day.

Six days of creation, six days of hard work and then rest descends. The Jewish home is bedecked in festivity; the flickering Shabbat candles sway in this sacred atmosphere. The children are dressed in their Shabbat finery and the smell of the delicious Shabbat foods warms the heart. A pristine white tablecloth covers the table which is adorned with elegant dishes, all contributing to a special peace of mind.

The father returns from the beit haknesset accompanied by the angels. This is the moment that the deeds come forward to praise the one who performed them. Now, in this weekly supplication, the head of the house sings a mizmor to the mainstay of the home – the heart and soul of all this passion. To the one, who with her special intuition, added yet another layer in building this monumental enterprise - 'home'. To the mother, who with the utmost devotion, invests all her inner strength in order to bestow this precious moment on her family, elevating them to this banquet hall of Shabbat. For all of this – "Her children arise and praise her, her husband, and he lauds her."