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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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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

## "One Who Toils and Achieves, Believe This"

**"You shall not curse the people, for it is blessed!"** (Bamidbar 22:12)

Chazal tell us that Yisrael had no greater enemy than the wicked Bilam, who wished to annihilate them with his curses, but Hashem in His great kindness prevented him from accomplishing this. He put a bridle in his mouth so that he was unable to curse, and when he saw that this power was taken from him, he asked to bless the people. Hashem replied, they do not need your blessings "for it is blessed!" This can be compared to the maxim said about the bee – "Neither from your sting nor from your honey."

Of course, when Bilam asked to bless the people, he did not really intend to offer them his blessings. His true intention was to curse; his blessings were really curses and this is why Hashem secured his mouth.

What was the source of Bilam's deep hatred of Am Yisrael? Why did he loathe them to such an extent that he wished to wipe them out?

Chazal tell us (Avot 5:19) "...[whoever has] three different traits is among the disciples of the wicked Bilam... Those who have an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and a greedy soul are among the disciples of the wicked Bilam." This evil eye was the crown of all of Bilam's corrupt traits. His envy is what ruined him. One who possesses this despicable trait will find it very hard to face another's success. He can't make peace with someone else's achievements and prosperity.

The wicked Bilam possessed this evil eye and could not bear witnessing Am Yisrael's success. His heart pined when he saw Hashem accompanying His people at every step of the way, showing concern for all their needs, protecting them with Divine Intervention and leading them in a miraculous way "as a nurse carries a suckling". His difficulty in accepting this was the cause of the fierce hatred that burned in his heart against Am Yisrael, and the root of his desire to destroy them.

There is an obvious question that begs clarification: If Bilam was indeed so wicked, how did he merit becoming a prophet? The verse tells us about Bilam (Bamidbar 24:16): "Knows the knowledge of the Supreme One". Chazal tell us that he knew how to reckon the moment when Hashem was angry; he was able to foretell the future and he even achieved Moshe Rabbeinu's level of prophecy, as it says, (Devarim 34:10): "Never again has there arisen in Israel a prophet like Moshe". Chazal expound on this, "In Israel there never has arisen, but among the nations, there has arisen."

How is it possible that Bilam achieved these high levels of prophecy if he possessed such bad middot, a profound hatred for Am Yisrael and abominable deeds?

The answer is simple and clear: The wicked Bilam did not work on himself to achieve these lofty levels. They were given to him as a free gift, without any toil on his part. He never desired to sanctify himself and did not

try to purify his thoughts in order to achieve spiritual greatness. On the contrary, he behaved with total abandonment and gave his evil inclination full permission to mislead him in his abhorrent path. All his bad traits were deeply entrenched in him.

Nevertheless, Hashem gifted him with a free gift of prophecy from His treasury and elevated him to great levels, all in order to prevent the nations coming with a fabricated complaint that if they too had prophets, they would have repented.

With a clear distinction between the holy and profane and between the pure and impure, Moshe Rabbeinu a"h merited his exceptional levels after striving and toiling greatly for them. He was considered as one of the disciples of Avraham Avinu a"h, who possess beautiful middot and upright ways, as the Tana says "Those who have a good eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul are among the disciples of our forefather Avraham." Moshe Rabbeinu showed great self-sacrifice and worked on himself immensely in order to achieve these good traits.

Already in his youth as he was growing up as a prince in the wicked Pharaoh's palace, Moshe was not enticed by wealth. Upon observing his brothers' suffering as a result of their enslavement by Pharaoh, he would remove his royal clothes and ease their workload. Similarly, he would comfort them and offer them words of encouragement by saying, "if only I could die instead of you". This is how Moshe developed the traits of kindness and humility, until his humility became his crowning glory. These positive traits became ingrained in him and were an integral part of his personality, for he toiled and strove to achieve them. Moshe Rabbeinu a"h merited pure yirat shamayim and exceptional closeness to Hashem, more than any other human being, due to the power of those elevated traits.

It is important for us to realize that unfortunately Bilam's counsel (to cause the Bnei Yisrael to sin with immorality) has not disappeared and until today still exists and is flourishing. Just as then, many of the Bnei Yisrael were ensnared by his trap of impurity – so too today, Bilam's counsel which presents itself in the form of our generation's massive technological advancements such as the internet and non-kosher cell phones, has caused many soldiers to fall r"l. Each and every one of us is obligated to be vigilant and protect ourselves from these dangers. We must be prepared to employ much effort and toil in order to safeguard ourselves and this is each and every person's sacred obligation. On the other hand, a person need only begin the undertaking and try to sanctify himself and purify his heart, thoughts and feelings, while distancing himself from hideousness and all similar matters, and then certainly he will feel Hashem supporting him in his journey towards purity and holiness, for one who makes the effort to purify himself, is blessed with Heavenly assistance.

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Hilula

17 - Rabbeinu Yehuda Ben Harosh

18 - Rabbi Yosef Kapach

19 - Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul,  
Rosh Yeshiva of 'Porat Yosef'

20 - Rabbi Avraham Chaim  
Na'eh

21 - Rabbi Rachamim Nahori, Av Beit  
Din of Paris

22 - Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin hy"d

23 - Rabbi Moshe Kardavira

24 - Rabbi Yehoshua Bardugo



## Walking in their Ways

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



## Words of our Sages

### Doubly Blessed

Imagine the devastation of a woman who was told, after numerous tests and treatments, that she was infertile and could never bear a child. This woman could not digest this terrible prediction. In spite of the doctors' ominous words, she placed her faith in Hashem, the ultimate Doctor. She came to me time and again, begging for my prayer and blessing that she should merit bearing children.

Of course, I acquiesced to her requests and offered my heartfelt blessings. But I added a caveat: she should not place undue hope in my blessings, for, according to the laws of nature, she could not bear children. It would be a shame to raise her hopes only to have them repeatedly dashed.

One day, this woman visited me. She felt that she was pregnant. At first, I didn't take her seriously. But on second thought, I changed my mind. I advised her to see a doctor and check if she was, indeed, expecting a baby.

To the amazement of all, her determination to bring her own child into the world became a reality. Not only was she expecting, but she was expecting twins. After nine months, she gave birth to a healthy boy and girl.

The night before the brit, her husband dreamed that eighteen thousand euro were stolen from him. The very next day, that is what happened. When he recounted this incident to me, I immediately saw the connection between his dream and his circumstances.

Eighteen is the numerical equivalent of the word חי (alive). In contrast, we are taught that a poor man is considered as if dead. When the money was stolen, this man became a pauper, as if divested of life. But Hashem, in His infinite mercy, brought the remedy before the malady and granted him a double portion of life through his twins, born to him most miraculously.

### Rabbi Salman Mutzafi's Secret Siddur

Throughout our history, the holy Sages of each generation have always conducted themselves with the utmost modesty and humility and attached much significance to this way of life. They distanced themselves completely from honor and fame, which is in direct contrast to the non-Jewish authorities, for whom their most prominent and compelling insinuation can be summed up by the verse that we find in this parsha: "For I shall honor you greatly" (Bamidbar 22:17).

The Navi Micha (in this week's Haftarah, Micha 6:8) cautions Bnei Yisrael about this harmful attribute: "Walk humbly with your G-d". This concept was manifest by the Gedolei Yisrael throughout the generations, their outstanding achievement in Torah was mirrored by their outstanding humility.

In actual fact, the whole concept of fame and publicity stems from an impure source. This is why Am Yisrael's leading characteristic is their modesty and inner focus. The greater the degree of humility, the more Torah and yirat shamayim will be found in that person.

The Gaon Rabbi Ben Tzion Mutzafi shlita, in the sefer 'Doresh Tzion', describes the personality of his illustrious father, Rabbi Salman zt"l. He was accustomed to going to the Kotel each day, for the afternoon and evening prayers. He used to take along the 'Siddur Rashash' and direct his prayers according to all the sublime intentions of the Rashash. He kept this siddur concealed in a special covering and would stand in a corner, with the siddur half closed. This is how he would pray for about half an hour.

"One of the people who had come to pray was curious to learn about this sefer that my esteemed father was praying from. He approached my father and tried to get a glimpse of the sefer. Realizing this person's intentions, my father immediately closed the siddur and turned it on its side, so that he shouldn't be able to identify the sefer. But the person was unrelenting and maneuvered his head to take a look at the back of the sefer, maybe this would enable him to discover the name of the sefer... My father took the siddur, put it inside his coat and then continued praying by heart. Afterwards he explained, "I gave up praying with all the lofty thoughts of the Rashash, just so that they shouldn't see me praying from the Rashash's siddur and exclaim, "What a great tzaddik"..."

The 'Peleh Yo'etz' writes that actions and customs that are performed because that is the halacha – are permitted to be done in public, but 'mlei d'chaseduta' – customs of piety- should be performed in privacy and not in the limelight.

Do you wish to act piously? On the contrary, be pious with your Creator. Do you wish to be stringent? This is definitely commended but be stringent with yourself. Don't broadcast it! Don't flaunt it!

The 'Chidah' writes, (quoting from the 'Zohar'): If a person publicizes his deeds – he will receive his reward in This World, whereas the punishment for his arrogance he will receive in the Next World. Not only will he not receive reward for his deeds in the World of recompense but will even be punished for them.

On the other hand, one who keeps his ways concealed, Hashem protects him and conceals him from negative powers, as it says in Tehillim (101:2-3): "I walk constantly with innocence of heart within my house...I despise doing wayward deeds, it does not cling to me." The fact that he hides and conceals his deeds in This World, will bring about the fulfillment of the verse "How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You" (ibid 31:20). He will receive his true reward in the Next World.

## The Haftarah

"The remnant of Ya'akov will be" (Micha 5-6)

The connection to the parsha: The haftarah speaks about Hashem's kindness that He performed with Am Yisrael, by directing Bilam's heart to bless the people. This is the same topic as the parsha which tells us about the wicked Balak, king of Moav and the wicked Bilam who intended to curse Am Yisrael, however in the end they blessed them.



## Guard Your Tongue

### Publicizing His Great Kindness

In the previous halacha we mentioned that when praising someone, one must take care that the praise should not lead to loss for the person being spoken about. Another example of this could be one who receives a loan from his friend and publicizes this great kindness. This could cause unscrupulous people to take advantage of this benefactor, which may result in him losing his money.

We can apply the following verse to this idea: "If one blesses his friend loudly from early in the morning, it will be considered a curse to him." (Mishlei 27:14)



## Pearls of the Parshah

### Who is Suited to Bless?

*"For I know that whomever you bless is blessed" (Bamidbar 22:6)*

The Tzaddik Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera zya"a, told over that in his country of origin- Morocco, there was a simple person to whom people used to go to ask for blessings, and many times his blessings were indeed fulfilled.

Rabbi Meir's son, the Admor Rabbi Elazar zya"a asked his father to explain this phenomenon (brought in the sefer 'Pekudat Elazar').

Rabbi Meir replied that true the man was simple and his father too was known as a simple person, but his father was also well known for his charitable acts.

Among all the kind deeds that he performed, he also used his profession as a tailor to this end. He was accustomed to collecting old or torn clothes from people, which he would then take the time to repair so that they were once again fitting to be worn and distribute them to poor people. It was merit of his father's good deeds that gave his son the merit of his prayers to be accepted.

In the same vein, there is a story told about the Alter of Slabodka. When he was ill, he sent a message to various gedolim and tzaddikim, asking them to pray for him. He also asked the town's pharmacist to pray for him. He explained that since the pharmacist helps others by preparing medications which serve to heal them, he has great merits and therefore his blessings will bear fruit, just like the prayers of a tzaddik or holy person.

### Bilam's Sin in Walking

*"G-d's wrath flared because he was going" (Bamidbar 22:22)*

What is the implication of "because he was going"?

The Gemarah (Berachot 7a) tells about a Sadducee who was a neighbor of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. The Sadducee used to bother him greatly and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi wished to get rid of him.

There is a certain moment in the day, at sunrise, when wrath is present in the world. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi wished to be awake at that moment so that he could curse the Sadducee; this would ensure that his curse would be fulfilled. How do we know when this moment occurs? When the crest of a rooster turns completely white.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi took a rooster and waited for the opportune moment.

However, just as the moment arrived – he fell asleep. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi understood that this was Heavenly ordained so that his wish should not be fulfilled.

The sefer 'HaTzaddik Rabbi Shlomo' explains that Bilam wished to curse the Bnei Yisrael and wished to do so at the exact moment when Hashem's wrath flared up. What did he do? He took a rooster and waited for the right moment, but when he saw that he was about to fall asleep, he started walking back and forth so as to keep himself awake. This is the meaning of "G-d's wrath flared up because he was going" – Hashem was angry with him for stubbornly trying to keep himself awake in order to intend his curse for the moment of Hashem's wrath.

### Hashem Watches Over

*"He declaimed his parable and said: "The words of Bilam son of Beor, the words of the man with the open eye; "the words of the one who hears the sayings of G-d, who sees the vision of Sh-ddai, while fallen and with uncovered eyes" (Bamidbar 24:3)*

The Gaon of Tshebin zt"l explains the above verse in the name of Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzhin:

"The words of the man"- when things don't go according to a simple person's desire, he declares: "the open eye" – Hashem, as if, is not watching over him. (Some commentaries say that "open eye" means that Bilam was blind in one eye.)

On the other hand, "the one who hears the sayings of G-d" – a G-d fearing person who heeds Hashem's word, he "sees the vision". Even when he is in a "fallen" state, he realizes that there are "uncovered eyes"; Hashem is watching over him and this situation is Hashem's wish.

## Treasures

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



### Impressed? Yes. Transformed? No!

The wicked Bilam was impressed with Bnei Yisrael and said (Bamidbar 24:5) *"How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov"*. The Gemara tells us (Sanhedrin 105b) that the tents refer to the houses of worship and study houses where Bnei Yisrael sit and occupy themselves with Torah study.

Bilam's admiration is very similar in nature to the amazement and astonishment of many people who come to visit Torah institutions and yeshivot.

For these people, it is their first close-up glimpse of the Torah world. Their eyes feast on the sight of hundreds of avreichim studying in a Kollel, or precious yeshiva bachurim sitting and delving into the holy Torah. At this overwhelming moment, it is easy to guess how moved they are by this incredible sight; they suddenly comprehend the boundless beauty and glory of our Holy Torah. How much respect they feel at that moment for those who dismiss all mundane pleasures and devote themselves singularly to Torah study!

But if this powerful sight touched their hearts to such an extent, how come it does not leave its mark afterwards? The marvel and awe that these people feel, slowly takes a back seat, and we don't find that they rush to become part of this yeshiva experience?! Why indeed do we not see any fundamental change?

The answer is simple: it is none other than a tactic of the evil inclination. True, he allows a person to be impressed and amazed at what he sees, but he makes sure that his innermost, latent feelings, the ones responsible for true change, will not be aroused. This is how the yetzer hara prevents a person from following in this beckoning path. This is the reason why it is so hard for a person to let go of his bad habits, and how easy it is for him to continue following the arbitrariness of his heart and fulfilling his hearts' desires, without accepting the burden of Torah and mitzvot. And so, he remains on his corrupt path, without rectifying his ways.

This is what happened with the wicked Bilam. He was very impressed with Am Yisrael and when he saw them sitting in groups and studying Torah, he cried out "How goodly are your tents, O Ya'akov". But as far as he himself was concerned, he wasn't prepared to change.

From his point of view, it was simply impossible to be bound by the laws of the Torah and to live his life according to its commandments. It would be simpler for him to continue behaving with abandonment and being misled by the pull of his evil inclination. It is then obvious why this admiration did not show results.



# "LET HER BE PRAISED"

## Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'

### In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

**"כפה פרשה לעני וידיה שלחה לאביון"**

**"She spreads out her palm to the poor, and extends her hand to the destitute"**

A wonderful story, told over by one of the Torah Sages zt"l, is brought in the sefer 'Lehagid':

"One day, we were carefully treading between the graves inside the large Vilna cemetery, when suddenly our eyes caught sight of an intriguing inscription on one of the tombstones: "Here lies..., son of..., passed away on... and buried on..."

The inscription concluded with the following words: "She spreads out her palm to the poor and extends her hand to the destitute".

This is a quotation from 'Eishet Chayil', a song ascribed to the Woman of Valor, yet here it was written as a testimonial to a man! This was a most surprising and definitely unusual phenomenon.

Our curiosity was aroused and we decided to try and determine the story that lay behind this tombstone. We investigated the archives and tried to find some reference in the old records of the chevra kadisha. We toiled and eventually discovered the name of this person and the tale that lay behind the unusual inscription:

There was a Jew who lived in Greater Vilna, who was devoted to performing charitable acts and benevolent deeds. His affluence was well-known in all the nearby towns, and most interesting, his generosity grew in accordance with his wealth. The more he earned, the more he increased his charitable acts on behalf of destitute Jews. For many years, he freely distributed his money to all who were hard pressed, both to the desperately poor and also to any person who required assistance. The special pleasure that he derived from distributing charity was most impressive. With his entire heart he loved dispersing his assets; he passed on his wealth to all those whose pockets were empty. A true pursuer of righteousness and kindness.

Suddenly a new era arrived. This righteous man started losing his money, his profits slowed down, and one small downfall led to another bigger downfall. He continued losing his wealth until his entire cash flow dried up. He was left with a fancy house, full of silver and gold possessions, but he had no money to distribute to the poor. The entire town was puzzled. The question echoed throughout the streets of Vilna. How could this happen to someone who so freely distributed tzedakah? Why was this generous person punished so severely? Hashem's ways are truly hidden.

The news reached the towns' Dayanim, Rabbanim and Gedolim. They considered the matter and decided to set up a Beit Din to review the situation. Why did this great punishment befall him? Several of the town's Sages sat down together and started delving into the man's conduct. All they could come up with was the following sin: This philanthropist did not heed the words of Chazal who instruct us not to give away more than a fifth of one's assets!

Out of his great desire to distribute tzedakah, he did not pay attention to this and handed out much more than a fifth.

This ba'al tzedakah who was now left without any money, did not give up his charitable ways so quickly. He continued his generosity in a new manner: he started distributing dishes and gifts from his own house, from his personal possessions.

When the Beit Din saw that 'his deeds outnumbered his possessions', they tried to come up with a way to prevent him from emptying out his entire home. They decided to put him under house arrest. "You are forbidden to leave your house", they told him and thought that this will prevent people from approaching him. The poor will not meet him in the street and so will have to search for other generous people to help them.

But the town's poor knew him too well and did not give up. They thought up an ingenious way to request donations. They knocked on his windows and would get together late at night and cry about their poverty, causing the rich man to wake up. He got up and went to look who was causing this commotion. How did he react? He gathered together whatever he could get hold of, all kinds of dishes, silver candelabras, candlesticks, clocks and other valuable items that he had in his home, and being unable to leave his house, he simply threw everything out of his window. This continued for several nights- slowly his house emptied of anything of value. Yet he continued giving with joy and enthusiasm, and with it, it seemed, double the pleasure, until not a single silver or gold item was left.

His last night in this world arrived. Once again, in the middle of the night, he was awoken by two poor people knocking on his window, crying. The (previously) wealthy owner's mercy was aroused and he went into his house to search for something of value to throw to them. He rummaged through his entire house but didn't find anything. All his possessions had already taken up residence in other people's houses. But the poor people did not give up and begged him, "Have mercy on us and on our families who are hungry for bread. Maybe there is still something that you can find?"

The owner went back into his house and once again did a thorough search; in the closets, on top of the closets, until he finally found something. He went out to the porch, holding aloft a golden spoon! The golden spoon that he had received from his wealthy father-in-law, on the day of his marriage. But there were two poor people crying to him and he had only one spoon- what should he do? He scratched his forehead, thought for a moment and then arrived at a simple solution: he broke the spoon into two parts. One of the poor received the handle of the spoon, while the other received the bowl of the spoon. They hurried away to try and sell their fortune and use the money to bring relief to their families.

The next morning the philanthropist was found lifeless in his home. He had returned his soul to his Maker.

This was the story which marked the end of his life and this was the reason behind the inscription from the words of 'Eishet Chayil': "כפה פרשה לעני" – the "כף" – the bowl of the spoon, he gave to one of the poor and "וידיה שלחה לאביון" – the "ידיית" – the handle of the spoon, he extended to the other one...