

Eikev

August 24th 2019
23rd of Av 5779

814



Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

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

The Essence of the Golden Calf Still Prevails

"Then I saw and behold! You had sinned to Hashem, your G-d; you made yourselves a molten calf; you strayed quickly from the way that Hashem commanded you" (Devarim 9:16)

In Parshat Eikev Moshe repeats all of Bnei Yisrael's sins and all the ways in which they angered Hashem, despite Hashem showing them His good and merciful Hand. One of the gravest sins that Bnei Yisrael committed in the Midbar was making the Golden Calf. It is the leading accusation against them and something for which we have suffered the consequences of throughout all the generations and still do.

We will try to explain why it is specifically the sin of the Golden Calf that is the chief allegation and for which Am Yisrael continues to be punished and to pay for this sin committed by a previous generation. There is yet another difficulty: Why did Bnei Yisrael choose to make a molten calf of gold, in place of taking a live calf from the numerous cattle that they possessed? Yet the greatest incredulity is how Bnei Yisrael, who were called the 'Dor De'ah' (enlightened generation), who witnessed Divine miracles and saw the Shechina face to face, fell to such a low level and committed one of the severest sins. They merited living in a most miraculous manner in the Midbar- their clothes did not wear out, they did not have to relieve themselves, food fell from the Heaven and the well of Miriam accompanied them wherever they went. This being the case, how could they behave so blindly with such ingratitude and anger Hashem by making a molten calf of gold?

We can answer these questions according to the Chazal (Sanhedrin 97a) that says, "Ben David (Mashiach) will only come when not a single coin remains in the pocket".

This seems like a surprising statement. What is the connection between the arrival of Mashiach and destitution? Can Hashem not hasten the redemption even when we are in a state of plenty?

When Bnei Yisrael came out of Mitzrayim, they were drawn after silver and gold. After the splitting of the sea and the drowning of the Egyptians, Hashem had to pull them away from the shore by force, since they were animatedly gathering the large amount of spoil that the sea spewed forth after the Egyptians drowned. Rashi expounds on the verse (Shemot 15:22) "Moshe caused Israel to journey from the Sea of Reeds" – "He made them journey against their will." The Bnei Yisrael left Mitz-

rayim with great wealth, for Hashem commanded them to borrow silver and gold vessels from the Egyptians, without intending to return them, in order to fulfil Hashem's promise to the Avot that their sons will leave Mitzrayim with great wealth. Despite their riches, they eagerly gathered the spoil that lay on the sea shore, since they attached great significance to silver and gold. There is no doubt that these commodities are necessary for a person's existence; Chazal even tell us (Avot 3:17), "If there is no flour there is no Torah", however the question is how much importance a person attaches to money and whether or not it is his ultimate aspiration.

Money must be given the appropriate status that it deserves and one must take care not to squander it on trivial matters, since only fools waste their money at their own expense. But a person must take care that money should not become a source of arrogance for him and he should not take pride in his money by thinking that "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth!" (Devarim 8:17). Instead a person should repeat to himself that everything that he owns is from Hashem and it is Him alone who decides who will be rich and who will be poor. When a person's entire interests are money and possessions and he is constantly thinking about ways to increase his wealth and honor, he quickly becomes a slave to his money- it becomes like his god and a real avodah zarah.

Parshat Eikev comes to impart the important lesson that a person should subordinate himself and behave like the heel (Eikev is from the word akev- heel), that is found in the lowest place in a person's body. Only when a person lowers himself and is ready to devote himself to Torah study whilst subsisting on little, can he serve Hashem with his entire heart.

All those who think that they can simultaneously increase their materialism and their Torah learning, are making a grave mistake. As we said, these two realities contradict each other and are directly opposed to each other. If materialism occupies a person's mind, the Holy Torah will quickly lose its favor in his eyes, since his passion to increase his material wealth is stronger than his fervor for Torah and mitzvot.

Only when the hearts of Bnei Yisrael are unconstrained by money and it is no longer found in their possessions, will Hashem be able to reveal His Shechina; it will be a time of "His kingdom reigns over all" (Tehillim 103:19).

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Hilula

23 - Rabbi Yisrael Ya'akov Kanievsky

24 - Rabbi Yishmael HaKohen, Rav of Tzfat, hy"d

24 - Rabbi Ezra Shayu

25 - Rabbi Shmuel Meyuchas

26 - Rabbi Yoel Tajtelbaum, the Admor of Satmar

27 - Rabbi Yehuda Moshe Patiah

28 - Rabbi Avraham Chaim Addas

29 - Rabbi Ya'akov Bardugo, author of 'Shufreha D'Ya'akov'



Walking in their Ways

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

Money? No Thank you!

A businessman once came to me and asked for a blessing to succeed in a certain business deal. He promised that if my blessing indeed comes to fruition, he will share the profits equally with me. This was certainly an enticing offer - he estimated the revenue at millions of Euro.

The truth is that at first I wanted to make him sign that he will indeed keep his promise. However, after a moment of introspection, I told him that I am prepared to bless him but I do not wish to share the profits since I am afraid of the challenge of wealth which can take a person away from the straight path and cause him to love his money more than he loves His Creator.

Those who were present at the time were astounded to hear this. They could not believe that I was so easily relinquishing such enormous gains with which, with Hashem's help, I could establish many yeshivot and increase Hashem's honor in the world.

I explained that indeed such sums could be used as a tool to disseminate Torah, and in addition, I will be relieved from the enormous pressure each month anew to cover the overheads of our institutions. However, because of the great danger inherent in wealth, I prefer to be preoccupied with raising money for the mosdot, rather than being tried and tested with this most difficult challenge. Who knows if I and my family, who have never become accustomed to a life of riches, will have the strength to withstand this test?

It is well known that my grandfather, the esteemed Tzaddik Rabbi Yeshayahu Pinto zya"n, named all his sefarim with names that included the word 'kessef' - money. ('Kessef Nivchar', 'Nivchar Mikessef', 'Kessef Nimass', 'Keiss', 'Mezusak', 'Kessef Tzoref' and more). My grandfather (may his virtue stand us in good stead, amen) explained that it is the way of the world to possess a deep love for money; a person longs to increase his wealth well above what he requires to take care of his basic needs.

The hidden message in this that he wished to convey is that just as it is crystal clear to a person that he cannot survive without money, so he must by himself know that he cannot survive without the Holy Torah. If only he would achieve the level of loving his Creator at least as much as he loves his money.

The Haftarah

"Zion said" (Yeshayahu 49)

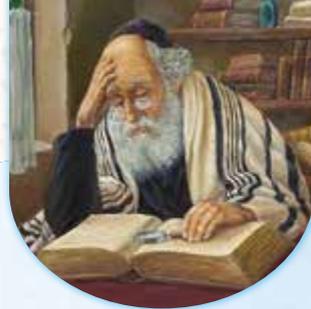
The connection to Shabbat: This Haftarah is the second of the seven special 'Haftarot of Comfort' that are read starting with the Shabbat following Tisha B'Av. They are chapters of comfort for the Bnei Yisrael, aside sections of faith in Hashem and His Torah.



Guard Your Tongue

Even Without Disparagement

The following halacha refers to a person who repeats to others what someone said about them or did to them. "I heard that he said such and such about you; I heard that he did/plans to do... to you". Even if his statement has no negative connotation and he has no unfavorable intentions when repeating this information and even if you would ask him, he would not deny that he said it, either because of the truth of the matter or because this was not his intention in repeating what the person said or did, he has still transgressed the prohibition of rechilut (gossip).



Words of our Sages

Is it Worthwhile Becoming Angry?

"To do that which is evil in the eyes of Hashem, to anger Him" (Devarim 9:18)

The trait of anger, recollections of which we would love to erase from our memories, is well defined by our Sages z"l: Two of the four types of temperament that are spoken about in Avot are: 'One who is angered easily and pacified easily', and 'one who is easily angered and hard to pacify'. Rabbi Yosef Mugarbi shlita explains in his sefer 'Avot Ubanim' that those who fit in to the category of 'angered easily', are the kind of people that are easily irritated. Whether at home, at work or on the road, if something does not work out for them in the way that they expect, they immediately become angry.

On the other hand, they are 'pacified easily'. This kind of person can come home, shout at his family, argue with them, even causing a most unpleasant scene, and suddenly, only a few minutes later, he is back to himself as if nothing happened. He doesn't hold a grudge and easily relinquishes his anger.

Chazal tell us that this type of person - 'his gain is offset by his loss'. He behaves like a fool, like a small child who is irritated by every little thing, but is also quickly appeased.

We are all familiar with people like this, whose lives are not lives. They lose themselves over every small irritation. Even if they are pacified easily, who wants to be in proximity of a person who constantly gets angry? People also scorn him for they already know that he shouts and yells and then a few moments later calms down and apologizes. This person is not regarded favorably by other people, and foremost in his own eyes. This is why "his gain is offset by his loss".

What does this mean?

As an illustration imagine a person whose bank account is overdrawn by a hundred thousand dollars. If he deposits four thousand dollars, this money will be swallowed up by his debt and won't make any significant difference to the balance. So too with a person who is constantly angry, even if he is pacified within a short time, what is this gain worth in contrast to what he lost through his anger?

It is not hard to find reasons to become angry or aggravated. But we are obligated to overcome this natural leaning and acquire the trait of patience.



Pearls of the Parshah

Healing Through the Letters of the Torah

"Hashem will remove from you every illness" (Devarim 7:15)

A poor man once came to Harav Ya'akov of Radzimin zt"l, and complained about his bitter lot: In addition to lacking sufficient means of livelihood, he lately began suffering from certain health ailments.

The Rebbe told him: Since there are no vowels in the Sefer Torah, one can read the words "v'haisir Hashem mimcha kol choli (Hashem will remove from you every illness)" as "v'haisir Hashem mi-mach (mach refers to a poor person). According to this reading the meaning of the verse is that Hashem will remove from the mach, from the poor person – every illness.

The blessing of the tzaddik was indeed fulfilled and the poor man regained his health.

Satiation is Appreciated Through Experiencing Hunger

"He afflicted you and let you hunger, then He fed you the manna that you did not know, nor did your forefathers know" (Devarim 8:3)

Where is the praise in the fact that Hashem afflicted the Bnei Yisrael and made them suffer hunger? This appears to be something negative; what was Moshe's goal in mentioning something seemingly 'bad' that Hashem did to His children? Besides, why would Hashem want to do such a thing?

The 'Mikdash Levi' explains that this 'bad' was in fact something positive. Hashem knew that if He would immediately inundate Bnei Yisrael with good, they will naturally not appreciate the good and will not gain the true benefit from it.

Therefore, He first afflicted them and let them hunger, and only then, "He fed you the manna". The point of this was so that they would derive the full benefit and thank their Creator wholeheartedly!

The Life-force of One's Limbs is Dependent on Mitzvot

"The entire commandment that I command you today you shall observe to perform, so that you may live" (Devarim 8:1)

To which mitzvah does this verse refer? In light of the fact that the Torah already mentioned "This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances" at the beginning of the parsha, the question is even stronger. What is the above verse adding?

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"l both asks and answers:

This verse only comes to warn a person that all the mitzvot of the Torah are considered like one extensive mitzvah with one foundation and edifice and when a person is not careful with even one small mitzvah, he is missing a part in 'acquiring the mitzvot' and it is considered as if he hasn't fulfilled any of the mitzvot in their entirety.

The Torah follows with a demonstration of this idea: "...so that you may live". Just like if one of a person's 248 limbs are hurting him, it has an effect also on his other limbs and the fact that the other limbs are healthy doesn't offer him any relief for this pain, so it is with mitzvot- performing other mitzvot does not make up for a laxity in a particular mitzvah.

In addition, the Ohr Hachaim explains, the life force of a person's limbs and sinews are dependent on performing the mitzvot. We have 248 limbs just as there are 248 positive commandments and our 365 sinews correspond to the number of negative commandments. When a person is lax in performing a certain mitzvah, he is losing out on the life force of a certain limb.

Treasures

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



Contemplation is the Way to Achieve Torah and Yirat Shamayim

"Now, O Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to go in all His ways and to love Him" (Devarim 10:12)

Moshe Rabbeinu tells Bnei Yisrael that Hashem is not demanding something too immense from us, but rather something easy – only to fear Hashem (yirat shamayim). It seems from Moshe's words that yirat shamayim is something easy to achieve, whereas we know how hard it is to achieve true fear of G-d?

We can explain this concept in the following way: Indeed, it is not difficult to achieve yirat shamayim, rather if we are having a hard time acquiring this trait, it is due to the presence of deterrents that hold us back in our avodat Hashem. The biggest factor is when a person does not know how to differentiate between good and bad, between straight and crooked, therefore he does not possess yirat shamayim. If a person is not committed solely to Torah but also has a desire for and finds pleasure in the fleeting gratifications of this world, the power of Torah cannot have an influence on him and it doesn't give the person the feeling of yirat shamayim that he needs to overcome his battle with the yetzer hara.

I was once making my way up to one of the higher floors in a building, and I noticed that the higher floors were much cleaner than the lower floors. The ground floor was very dirty while the first floor was less so, and so it progressed, the higher we climbed the cleaner the area was. The reason is that the ground floor is the most heavily used- all those entering the building pass through this area, including the people who live on the second and third floors. But the higher floors are only used by those who live on those floors; the ground floor occupants don't step there. The higher one climbs, the less number of people and the cleaner it becomes.

I took this as a moral lesson. The more a person is connected to materialism, the more 'contaminated' he is; the more a person elevates himself and distances himself from the fleeting pleasures of this world, the 'cleaner' he is. It is vital to understand that all the pleasures of this world do not have any intrinsic value; they are only here to assist a person so that he can better serve Hashem. Contemplating this idea is the only way to acquire Torah and yirat shamayim.



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'
In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

פִּיהָ פְּתֹחָהּ בְּחַכְמָה וְתוֹרַת־חֶסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ

**"She opens her mouth with wisdom,
and the teaching of kindness is on her
tongue"**

When Rabbi Elazar came to this verse, he wondered, what is 'Torat chessed'? Is there Torah that is chessed and Torah that is not chessed?

The Gemara (Succah 49b) explains this concept: "Torah that is learnt in order to pass on to others is 'the teaching of kindness', whereas Torah that is learnt not for the sake of teaching others is considered Torah that is not kindness."

This is a most important foundation. 'Torat chessed' is Torah that its owners do not keep for themselves but rather involve others. With great generosity they are delighted to share their knowledge with one and all. Not every 'marbitz Torah' (one who teaches Torah to others) can be accredited with the title of 'The teaching of kindness is on his tongue'. This can only be said about someone who teaches Torah not for the sake of glorifying his own name and becoming famous. 'Torat Chessed' is only fitting in the absence of seeking honor, in a place of great humility. For such a person his motivation in disseminating Torah is not a selfish one but one of kindness.

The distinguished Rabbanit a"h, Marat Mazal Pinto zya"a, was a most fitting example of 'Torat chessed'. She performed many acts of kindness both with her resources and with her very being. In addition, she also merited passing on this exceptional trait to her upright offspring, as we see clearly from the life of her son, the esteemed Gaon and tzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, who is a living example of 'Torat chessed', both with his dissemination of Torah to all walks of life all over the world, and in being a pillar of kindness, all of which he performs without any personal interests or goals.

All those who were fortunate to be acquainted with the Rabbanit knew that whenever she spoke, it was

with words of wisdom, just like a talmid chacham who only opens his mouth with wisdom, as the Gemara tells us, "Even the mundane conversation of talmidei chachamim needs Talmud". This means that in their everyday conversation there are to be found Torah teachings. Even when she spoke about performing kindness, it was with a method about how to perform kindness in the correct way - how to lend people money while ensuring that they will repay, how to give charity in a way that will encourage those on the receiving end to find a way out of their privation. The kindness that she performed was intertwined with wisdom, just like the true 'Eishet Chayil' who before lecturing about wisdom or kindness, tests it in her own life.

In the Merit of the Rabbanit

The wife of the Gaon Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l, was the one who urged him to publish his sefer 'Even Ha'ezel'. After Rabbi Moshe Mordechai, the brother-in-law of the 'Even Ha'ezel', published a sefer, his wife asked him with curiosity: "Why don't you print your chiddushim (novel Torah thoughts)?" His answer was simple: "I don't have any chiddushim and I don't have what to publish".

"How can it be", wondered the Rabbanit, "after years of being a Rosh Yeshiva you don't have any of your own chiddushim?" "I have chiddushim", Rabbi Isser Zalman replied, "but they are few and far between and are not enough to fill a sefer."

"If so", the Rabbanit suggested, "print what you have, even if it is just a small pamphlet and when you have more chiddushim you can immediately publish another section. In this way after some time you will be able to put together a substantial, quality sefer."

The Rav accepted his wife's suggestion, and printed one volume. Sometime later he printed another volume, and this eventually developed into the famous sefer 'Even Ha'ezel' on the Rambam. Rabbi Isser Zalman would say that this sefer came to light entirely in the merit of his Rabbanit, Baila Hinda.

Indeed, "She opens her mouth with wisdom".