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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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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"l



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

A Small Amount of Light Dispels Much Darkness

"It happened at the end of two years to the day: Pharaoh was dreaming" (Bereishit 41:1)

The Midrash writes (Bereishit Rabba Ch. 89:1), "This is what is written, 'He sets a limit to the darkness'. He apportioned several years for Yosef to remain in darkness and obscurity in the prison. As soon as the end arrived, immediately, Pharaoh had a dream."

Yosef suffered constantly, as he testified about himself (Bereishit 40:15), "For indeed I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing for them to have put me in the pit". He lived far from his father's home, his brothers ostracized him and hated him, and Potiphar's wife pressured him to sin and tried to ensnare him in her trap. Now suddenly "at the end of", the time had come to end all his tribulations and hardship, darkness departed and it was time for the light to illuminate.

There is also a concept of spiritual darkness. The Midrash says (Bereishit Rabba Ch. 2, siman 4) on the verse, "with darkness on the surface of the deep": 'Darkness' refers to the Greek exile, since they darkened the eyes of Yisrael with their decrees by saying to them, "Write for yourselves on the horn of an ox, 'We have no portion in the G-d of Israel'". The Greeks wished to cause the Jewish people to forget Torah and mitzvot, and it is only possible to eliminate this kind of darkness with the light of Torah. When the light of Torah shines, this disperses the Greek darkness.

This is a battle that we continue to struggle with until today. Although the Greek empire no longer exists, its culture endures, and the desire to 'darken' the Torah and abolish all forms of its goodness, still lives on. Only through occupying ourselves with and toiling in the Holy Torah, will its light shine and illuminate the darkness.

The miracles of Chanukah that symbolize victory of the spirit, continue their effect in our day too. All kinds of foreign cultures beckon us, their goal being to make us forget the Torah and obscure our vision. Against these two kinds of darkness, spiritual darkness and physical darkness, we wage a battle until this very day. These two battles are intertwined for in the merit of the light of the Holy Torah we merit defeating the non-Jewish culture which tries to annihilate our spirituality and we also merit being saved physically from our enemies who rise up against us, for example, the wicked Haman and others who wished to destroy us. For the Torah 'protects and saves', therefore when we will merit, with Hashem's help, the true light with the coming of Mashiach, we will know that it is in the merit of our standing firm in these two battles, and a result of our engaging in the Holy Torah.

This, then, is the reason why we kindle lights during Chanukah, to dispel the darkness. We follow the opinion of Beit Hillel and each day of Chanukah we add another light since it is incumbent upon every one of us to each day increase our Torah learning and go from strength to strength. This is the only way to drive away the darkness which the Greeks wished to envelop us with and dim our souls. On the other hand, Beit Shammai is of the opinion that on the first day one lights eight lights and on each successive day one reduces the number. Their view is that we must remember the method which the Greeks used to make us forget Hashem's Torah and mitzvot. Since the Greeks did not approach the Jewish

people with an unequivocal demand of, "Forsake the Torah of your G-d", for they knew that Am Yisrael would never comply with this ultimatum, they therefore tried to inject the poison of heresy bit by bit. They started out with trying to make them forget a bit of Torah, and indeed many of Am Yisrael did not notice the net that the Greeks had spread out for them and therefore followed them. In this way they slowly gave up the Torah way of life until they eventually became Hellenists, detaching themselves completely from the Torah.

The Greek culture can be compared to the evening which symbolizes darkness. As we know, the night does not appear suddenly, it gradually grows dark. At first, the sun sets and this period is considered as twilight. This is followed by the emergence of the stars. 'Night' is a progression that continues until the day becomes completely dark. This is the way in which the Greeks tried to inculcate their culture in the Jewish people; they started with a slow descent which was followed by another descent, just like the view of Beit Shammai who hold that each day one lights one light less, until arriving at their intended goal, segregating the Jewish people from any spark of Jewishness, G-d forbid.

How great indeed is the light of Torah! Paris, a place of impurity and harsh klippot, is home to our holy Yeshiva where many young, precious Yeshiva students abstain from any physical pleasures and despise the vanities of this world. They sit sheltered in the shade of the Holy Torah and occupy themselves with Torah study fused with a fiery enthusiasm. The light of the Torah radiates from their shining faces. How does one merit this sublime strength? What is the magic which pulls them to the world of Torah? The answer is that this is the segulah of Torah. The light within the Torah brings one back to the good and just like a small amount of light has the capacity to dispel much darkness, tasting the Torah's sweet nectar makes it hard to separate oneself from it, just as we are told, "Contemplate and see that Hashem is good". This is how they merit overcoming their yetzer hara.

So too, at the time of the Chashmonaim, although they were few in number since many of Am Yisrael had fallen prey to the Greek culture and thereby darkened the Torah, however the light of Torah which shone on those select few, succeeded in banishing the darkness from all of Am Yisrael and inspiring everyone by its light. "A small amount of light dispels much darkness" and through this, they merited being saved from the Greeks.

There is a Midrash which interprets the verse in Shir Hashirim (7:14) in the following way: "All my baskets, good and bad, emit a fragrance' this refers to Reuven. 'all at our doors have the precious fruits of comely deeds', this refers to the kindling of the Chanukah lights, which one lights by the entrance." This Midrash fits in perfectly with what we explained above. For one who wishes to be like 'Reuven' (ראובן), that the letters of this name can be re-arranged to spell 'a son of light' (בן אור), meaning a 'ben Torah', must always add to the light of Torah just like with the Chanukah menorah where we add a light each day.

May it be His will that we merit holding tight to Hashem's Torah and studying it with diligence, forever increasing our attachment to its light. In this way we will drive away the darkness and the spiritual light will shine on us always, Amen.

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Hilula

30 - Rabbi David Oppenheim

1st Tevet - Rabbi Yair Chaim Bachrach, author of 'Chavat Yair'

3 - Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz

4 - Rabbi Shaul Duvek HaKohen

5 - Rabbi Avraham Ya'akov of Sadigurah

6 - Rabbi Yehoshua Amram

6 - Rabbi Yechezkel of Shinovah



Walking in their Ways

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

Justifying Judgment

I once got a shocking call from Marseille, France. I was notified that a young woman of twenty-nine had succumbed to the ravages of cancer. The first thought that entered my mind was, "Why do youngsters who are free of sin, have to die?" This girl had been on the road to recovery. Her hair had grown back, and whoever saw her thought she was a walking miracle. But, in the end, the illness overtook her and claimed her life. She never merited marrying and leaving descendants.

Some doubtful thoughts regarding Divine Providence entered my mind. Suddenly, I pulled myself together and called out, "Blessed be the true Judge."

Similarly, I once came across an album of the Holocaust. It depicted over one hundred horrific photographs from that accursed period in our history. I was filled with anger and consumed by a tough question, "Why were innocent people punished so cruelly?" But here, too, I released myself from the web of the Yetzer Hara, who tried to make me stumble with my faith. I remembered what I had heard in the name of a prominent Rabbi, who said over at the time of the Holocaust: "When a person hears bad tidings but accepts Hashem's ruling with love, proclaiming, 'Baruch Dayan Ha'emet,' unquestioningly and with perfect faith, then, when he arrives at the Heavenly Court, he will be treated in a like manner. He will not be asked why he did such-and-such sin, but will be judged favorably, as he had judged Hashem in this world."

Besides, I reminded myself that when a Jew is faced with misfortune, he must accept it unquestioningly and with love. He should also examine his actions and see if they were the cause of his troubles. He will thereby merit doing teshuvah.

The Haftarah

"Sing and be glad" (Zechariah 2-4)

We add two verses from the Haftarah of "The heaven is my throne" (Yeshaya 66:1) and "Tomorrow is the new moon" (Shmuel II, 20:18).

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah mentions the lights and the menorah that the navi Zecharya saw, which is connected to this time of the year when we kindle the Chanukah lights.

Guard Your Tongue

Commitment and Confession

If one transgressed and heard lashon hara and believed it, he can rectify his sin by working on himself to no longer believe what he heard. He should accept upon himself for the future, to no longer believe lashon hara that he hears about any Jewish person. He should confess his sin and through this, he rectifies the prohibitions that he transgressed by accepting lashon hara.



Words of our Sages

What Impressed Professors Guto and Tukano?

"So, Pharaoh sent and summoned Yosef, and they rushed him from the dungeon" (Bereishit 41:14)

Owing to the well-known episode which stirred the entire Jewish population around the world, when three yeshiva students were arrested and imprisoned in Japan, an interesting meeting took place in the home of the Posek Hagaon Harav Shmuel Halevi Vosner zt"l. As part of a tour of Bnei Brak, two prestigious Japanese attorneys, Professor Guto and Professor Tukano, went to visit Harav Vosner zt"l.

"We are indebted to the Japanese government," the Rav began, referring to the rescue of the fifty yeshiva students during the Holocaust, through issuing them Japanese visas. "And we have not forgotten Sugihara," he continued, referring to the Japanese ambassador of Kovno, (temporary capital of Lithuania), who was a heaven-sent messenger to save many Jews, including many distinguished European yeshivot, for example the 'Chachmei Lublin' at the time of the Holocaust. "We are indebted to the Japanese government for saving a large share of the Yeshiva world."

Attorney Guto then addressed Harav Vosner: "What form of penalty do religious Jews bestow if someone commits an offense? What sanctions are they given?" Harav Vosner replied: "Today we do not have power. Our Jewish law courts do not have any enforcers of the law or the jurisdiction to implement rulings. But we do exclude them from being considered part of the Jewish people." It was, of course, an especially harsh statement that made it clear to the guests how strongly religious Jewry opposes any kind of crime.

Attorney Tukano: "It is a shame that the judges do not see and do not hear what

we see and hear here, in the house of the spiritual leader of the people. They would look at the detainees in a completely different light." Harav Vosner: "I pray that our meeting will help you prove the children's innocence."

During the course of the conversation Harav Vosner put forth a request: "Honorable attorneys, I wish to request something from you. I know that it is not something easy and also how hard you have tried. But nevertheless, I am requesting once again that until the conclusion of the procedure, please see to it that the children receive kosher food, food which is permitted by their religion. It has been historically proven that Japan honors the Jewish law and you have what to depend on when you put forth your request for kosher food for the two children who are still under your jurisdiction."

It was a distinctive moment – the lawyers were deeply impressed by the leader of the Jewish people who was concerned for a seemingly small detail as obtaining kosher food. This great Sage begged them before they left to do all in their power to promise that as long as the boys are imprisoned in Japan, they will receive food that the Jewish law permits them to eat.

The Japanese lawyers understood the significance of the fact, the likes of which they would never find among their own people, that a person of such royal stature, as they themselves defined him, goes out of his way to take care of kosher food for the boys. They promised on the spot that they will do whatever they can to fulfill Rav Vosner's heartfelt request.

The meeting came to an end and the visitors approached Harav Vosner one by one, with just one request: They asked for 'a blessing' from the Rav. Even these non-Jewish Japanese attorneys understood that from this illustrious personage one must ask for a blessing. "In the merit of your efforts on behalf of the students, may all your desires be fulfilled for the good", Rav Vosner blessed them, adding a blessing that they should be successful in their lawsuit.

Treasures

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



Pearls of the Parsha

Be a Compassionate Person

"And may Kel Shakai grant you mercy" (Bereishit 43:4)

Apparently, the verse should say, 'וקל שקי יתן עליכם רחמים', Hashem should have mercy on you, instead of 'וקל שקי יתן לכם רחמים', Hashem should give mercy to you. Ya'akov's intention when saying these words to his children was that Hashem should have mercy on them, if so why does it say 'לכם'?

Rabbi Moshe Yechiel of Ozrov zt"l explains that one who desires that Heaven have mercy on him must first make sure that he himself is a merciful person, as it says "One who has mercy on the creations, Heaven has mercy on him" (Shabbat 151a).

Therefore, Ya'akov Avinu a"h, blessed his sons that they should merit being merciful people, that Hashem should bless them with this positive attribute of compassion for others and then automatically Heaven will have mercy on them too.

The Promise of Tefillat Haderech

"They had left the city, had not gone far, when Yosef said to the one in charge of the house, "get up, chase after the men" (Bereishit 44:4)

From the wording of the verse it seems that because they had not gone far, Yosef told him to chase after them. What is the connection?

Rabbeinu Chaim Vital zya"l explains that 'tefillat haderech' (the wayfarer's prayer recited when setting out on a journey) protects a person that he shouldn't come to harm on his journey. One is obligated to recite this prayer only once one has gone at least one pasha (about 140 feet) past the last house of the town.

Yosef knew that his brothers would recite the wayfarer's prayer, therefore, he commanded to chase after them before they would have distanced themselves too much from the town, meaning before they would have a chance to recite the prayer.

Some mefarshim explain that this is why Yosef instructed to fill their bags "with as much food as they can carry". He wished to make their burden heavier so they wouldn't be able to travel quickly and in this way, it will be easy to run after them and catch them up in good time.

Yosef's Attribute of Humility

"When Yehuda arrived with his brothers to Yosef's house, he was still there. They fell to the ground before him" (Bereishit 44:14)

Rashi explains the words, "He was still there", as "He waited for them".

The sefer 'Yismach Lev', of the Griz Lubinski zt"l, asks the following question: Why do we need to know that Yosef was waiting for them? The words "He was still there" seem to be redundant since if we are told that they fell to the ground before him, he was obviously still there.

He explains that these words spell out a message of Yosef Hatzaddik's great level. Even when his brothers came to bow down before him and he saw his dreams being fulfilled tangibly, it nevertheless did not cause him to become arrogant and he remained as humble as he was when they threw him in the pit since he knew that all the greatness that was bestowed on him was from Heaven. It was not given to him for his own honor but in order to save his father and brothers from famine, and that a vast people be kept alive.

This is the meaning of the words "he was still there". Although "They fell to the ground before him", he was there with the same feelings that he had when he was in the pit.

When Morning Appears, Diversity Disappears

"It happened at the end of two years to the day: Pharaoh was dreaming" (Bereishit 41:1)

The Midrash writes (Bereishit Rabba Ch. 89:1), "This is what is written, 'He sets a limit to the darkness'. He apportioned several years for Yosef to remain in darkness and obscurity in the prison. As soon as the end arrived, immediately, Pharaoh had a dream."

One can explain this to mean that when baseless hatred and hostility exist between people and they judge each other in a negative light, this in fact is darkness and obscurity. When he sees his friend a kind of darkness envelops him; it is hard for him to look at him because of the hatred that he feels. But when one makes peace, he is filled with an illuminating light and can rejoice with his friends' good fortune and judge him favorably.

This is what the Midrash is telling us: They had now come to the end of the darkness of hatred that was present between the brothers. Until now the brothers hated Yosef because of the dreams that he dreamt about them. But now, although Yosef had not yet revealed himself to them, the hatred between them was already a past affair and they started to yearn to see him and to consider where he could be, out of concern for his welfare.

Yosef, on his part, forgave them for their deeds because he knew that "All that the Merciful One does is for the best". At this point they already felt closer at heart, therefore it says "He sets a limit to the darkness". Until now because of the hatred, they were steeped in a state of darkness and obscurity, but once they came closer to peace, the light was revealed and the darkness of hatred and separation that existed between them was dispersed.

To this idea we can apply the verse (Bereishit 1:5), "And there was evening and there was morning". Chazal tell us that the word 'ויהי', (and there was) always denotes sorrow. What is the sorrow here? It refers to the darkness of hatred between man and his friend. The word 'ערב' (evening) is made up of the same letters as 'בער', as in the verse (Tehillim 73:22) "And I was senseless (בער) and unknowing". One who hates his friend lives in the darkness of evening and is considered a senseless and ignorant person.

The word 'ערב' is also from the term 'ערבות' (guarantee). "All Yisrael are responsible (ערבין) for each other". When this bond is defective and man hates his friend, he is surrounded by darkness like in the evening. But once one makes peace and there is an increase in unconditional love, this is a situation of 'ויהי בוקר', (and there was morning). When 'ויהי' is followed by 'morning', it denotes joy. Dawn breaks and illuminates the day. The word 'בוקר' (morning) is made up of the same letters as 'קרוב' (near). When a person draws closer to his friend's heart and acts with unity, everything shines for him. It is morning for him since he feels the great light of peace and unity.

A TIMELY MESSAGE



Glorifying the Mitzvah Through Perfecting One's Middot

The Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Or, Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg zt"l, would speak about the special power inherent in the days of Chanukah. He pointed out that these are days unique for growing in Torah since the secrets of Torah were given over to Moshe Rabbeinu on Chanukah (Chatam Sofer). He quoted the sefarim that say that Chanukah was the time when the Chatam Sofer arrived at the majority of his novel Torah insights. At his talk at the Chanukah gathering, Rabbi Chaim quoted the Pri Megadim who says that the Greeks did not just wish to cause the Jewish people to neglect the Torah, but rather they wanted to stop them from occupying themselves with the wisdom of the Torah.

He explained that the Greeks wished to wipe out our occupation with the discerning understanding which is intertwined in the Torah, for if one does not learn in depth, this takes away from the main realization of Torah. This is why specifically during Chanukah one should study Torah in-depth.

He would often say over to the young students: "Know that every single one of you can become a talmid chacham or a Rosh Yeshiva and compile sefarim of your own novel Torah insights." Sometimes when he would talk to young boys and children, he would give over the message on their level: "Each one of you is capable of writing the 'Taba'at Hachoshen' (the sefer that he wrote on the valuable sefer 'Ketzot Hachoshen')! What do you think, that in one day I wrote a sefer of chidushei Torah? I started out small, slowly adding a bit more. You should know that the 'nature' of anything spiritual is 'supernatural'. We see this idea on Chanukah, when there was only enough oil for one day but in the end, it lasted for eight days. If a person assesses himself according to his natural abilities, he will only learn a bit

and nothing will come of him. But as we said, the essence of anything spiritual is above nature. This is why Chazal were so stringent about publicizing the Chanukah miracle, because it is important to understand this foundation."

In this column we chose to focus on an area of perfecting one's middot, culled from the noble middot of the Rosh Yeshiva zt"l, as described in the sefer "Mi'gadluto U'meromemuto":

In a halacha shiur just before Chanukah, Rabbeinu quoted the 'Chessed l'Avraham', who says that the best way of fulfilling the mitzvah of menorah is with a silver menorah. He stressed that this means that the idea is that one should light inside the silver holders of the menorah, and if one lights in small cups that one inserts into the menorah, one loses the main glorification of the mitzvah.

At the end of the shiur, his talmidim approached him and asked: "Doesn't Rabbeinu himself light in small cups which he places inside the silver menorah?!" This was his reply: "If I light in the menorah itself, after Chanukah, who will be the one to scrub and scour the menorah? The Rabbanit! Do you think that I will perform a hidur mitzvah (added aspect in glorification of the mitzvah) that imposes on the Rabbanit and will be at her expense?"

Caution Not to Cause Distress to Any Person

Rabbeinu could not bear the thought of someone suffering, especially if it was on his account. Even if the person deserved to be rebuked, he was careful not to distress him unnecessarily and not to be honored by his disgrace.

Every so often Rabbi Chaim would go to the bedrooms after the morning prayers to wake up those bachurim who had not been present at shacharit. These visits taught the talmidim an entire chapter in derech eretz: How to admonish, the way in which he gave each student the feeling that he respects him and accepts his explanation, and mainly how he was particular to protect the esteem of the one whom he came to reprove.

Once when he went to one of the rooms, he tried to enter but the door was locked. He knocked on the door and one of the roommates called out, "Who's

there?" Rabbeinu answered that it was him. That student did not believe him and thought that it was a student who was copying the Rosh Yeshiva's voice so he answered disrespectfully. So it went on for a few moments, with Rabbeinu knocking and the student answering inappropriately. Suddenly the student decided to open the door. As soon as Rabbeinu heard the key turning in the lock, he quickly ran away. He realized that the student will be embarrassed and would not know where to hide himself in shame. Since he had no wish to embarrass him, he ran away so as not to see who the student was.

The following incident shows the extent of his sensitivity, even when there was only a suspicion of a small amount of distress that may be caused to others: Once when he had a plaster on one of his finger's, he was honored with being sandek. Before he left for the brit he took off the plaster in case it would be unpleasant for the father of the baby. Another demonstration of his sensitivity was when he went to weddings of Admorim and chassidik families. He would hide his tie under his tzitzit, in order to honor their minhag (of not wearing a tie) and so that their differences should be as inconspicuous as possible.

It once happened that before the Thursday night 'mishmar' shiur, one of the bachurim pushed together two tables that were close to Rabbeinu, and without realizing it, caught Rabbeinu's finger between the tables. Although the bachur did not realize what happened, it was clearly a hard knock and others who were present were astonished that Rabbeinu did not utter a sound.

He hid his finger under the table and hinted with his other hand to the other bachurim, that they shouldn't say anything. During the give and take of the shiur when without realizing it he withdrew his hand from under the table, they saw that his finger was blue from the intensity of the blow. But, in order not to cause distress to that bachur, so that he shouldn't feel aggravation from his unintentional act, Rabbeinu hid his finger and exercised enormous self-restraint by not showing any sign of pain. He gave over the shiur as if nothing had happened.

The lesson is clear!