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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

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**MASKIL LEDAVID**

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

How Do You Spend Your Money?

"Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her friend silver vessels and gold vessels" (Shemot 11:2)

At the time of the redemption, the Jewish people became very wealthy, as a result of the valuables that they took from the Egyptians before they left and also from the spoil that was flung onto the shore after the Egyptians drowned. While they were still in Mitzrayim, Hashem commanded them, "Let each man request of his fellow and each woman from her friend silver vessels and gold vessels", and later it says (Shemot 12:36), "They emptied Egypt", on which the Sages comment, "They made it like the depths of the sea that has no fish". The spoil that they gathered from the seashore also added to their wealth, to the extent that Chazal say that every Jew left with ninety Libyan donkeys, laden with an abundance of silver and gold. Moshe Rabbeinu even had to lead them away by force, as it says, (Shemot 15:22) "Moshe caused Israel to journey from the Sea of Reeds". Chazal explain that this expression implies that he made them journey against their will since it was hard for them to take leave of the treasures of gold there.

It is interesting to note that the spoil that they took out from Egypt was given to them on loan and not as a gift, as it says, "Each woman shall borrow from her neighbor" (Shemot 3:22). Later too, the verse tells us, "They borrowed from the Egyptians silver vessels, gold vessels and garments" (Shemot 12:35), whereas concerning the spoil from the sea, this expression of 'borrowing' is not used. This indicates that it was given to them as a gift. Why this distinction?

It could be that Hashem specially gave Am Yisrael part of the wealth as a gift and part on loan, so that if a person comes and claims that it is hard for him to keep the mitzvot since many of them involve a considerable expense, for example when buying quality tefillin, mezuzot or arba minim, Hashem will answer him that he should know that part of what he owns was not given to him as a gift, it is rather on loan from Hashem.

It is true that a part of his resources was given to him for his personal needs but the rest is on loan so that it should be easier for him to fulfil the mitzvot. In reality, he is only taking care of Hashem's possessions that are entrusted to him so that he can fulfil the mitzvot and is not therefore even using his own personal money.

Tzaddikim who long to fulfil Hashem's will, take even the portion of their resources that Hashem gives them for their own needs, and consecrate it to Hashem. They willingly sacrifice it for a higher purpose, to fulfil "You shall love Hashem...with all your resources". Chazal explain these words as meaning, "with all your money". This is why Chazal say (Chulin 91a), "The money of

tzaddikim is more precious to them than their bodies". Because they understand how many mitzvot and good deeds they can accomplish with their money, whether it is enhancing a mitzvah, giving charity or performing acts of kindness, this is why their money is dear to them. They use it as a means to bring pleasure to their Creator.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"א, had a custom never to go to sleep at night before distributing to the poor any money that he had in his possession. He understood that if he was given money, it was only for the sake of fulfilling the mitzvah of tzedakah. Why should it remain in his own pocket for no purpose? This is the kind of person about whom we can say that his money is precious to him, for he understands the true value of money as a means of increasing his share in the World to Come.

Fortunate is the one who understands where to invest his money. A person can, chalila, inherit gehinom with his money, or alternatively, use it to acquire mitzvot and good deeds and merit the public and in this way he will merit Gan Eden.

Chazal tell us (Baba Batra 11a), about the king Mubaz who 'wasted' his treasures on the poor during a year of drought. His family came to him and said: Your ancestors set aside all kinds of valuables, and added their own silver and gold to the previous generation's store, and you are wasting your ancestors' valuables and your own? He answered: My ancestors put away treasures down below; I am storing my treasures up in the Heavens. My ancestors stored in a place which is in the control of the human hand; I am storing in a place where the human hand has no control. My ancestors stored something that bears no fruit; I am storing something that gives forth fruit. My ancestors stored treasures of money; I am storing treasures of the soul. My ancestors stored for others; I am storing for myself. My ancestors stored for this world; I am storing for the Next World, as it says, "Your righteous deed will precede you and the glory of Hashem will gather you in" (Yeshayahu 58:8).

This is the way of the righteous who understand the great value inherent in the money that they possess, using it for Heavens' sake.

These stories are extremely powerful. We are talking about tzaddikim who clearly understood that their money was given to them on loan, as a means of fulfilling Torah and mitzvot. Therefore, when they were presented with a mitzvah opportunity, they happily gave away all the money that the situation required. This was the only reason they were given the money in the first place. We are commanded (Devarim 14:22), "רשעת רשע", you shall tithe. The second part of the compound verb הַשַּׁעַת הַשַּׁעַת, you shall tithe, can be read רַשְׁעָתָּהּ, you will become rich. Chazal teach on this verse that if you give tithes, you will become rich (and will then be able to perform more mitzvot).

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Hilula

6 - Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman, author of 'Oneg Yom Tov'

7 - Rabbi David of Lelov

8 - Rabbi Yosef Gian, Av Beit Din of Bengazi

9 - Rabbi Ya'akov Katina, author of 'Rachmei Ha'Av'

10 - Rabbi Shalom Mizrachi, the Rashash Hakadosh

11 - Rabbi Chaim Toledano

12 - Rabbi Rafael Pinto zy"א



Walking in their Ways

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

The Power of the Yetzer Hara

The following story emphasizes how the yetzer hara tries with all his might to mislead a person and prevent him from performing mitzvot:

One Chol Hamoed Pesach (5771) when I was receiving people, a bachur, whose external appearance told me that he was far from being a G-d fearing Jew, came in to see me. But as he spoke, I soon understood that with G-d's help, he merited recognizing the true light, and he was now on the path of repentance. Hearing this brought me great joy.

I tangibly saw the Hand of Hashem as he explained how he was introduced to me. This happened a few days before the chag, when he was in the Beit Midrash. He noticed my sefer 'Kerem David', on Pirkei Avot. He started reading it and was most inspired. That is what gave him the idea of trying to get an audience with me.

I thanked Hashem for this merit, and of course I encouraged him to strengthen his connection with Hashem and his adherence to the correct path. In order to bring him closer, I suggested that he join me the following morning for Shacharit, in the Beit Knesset where I usually pray, to which he happily agreed.

To my great dismay, that night my throat began bothering me and felt very sore. My fever rose and I began to shiver. I felt most unwell and lay awake the whole night. Only towards morning did I fall asleep for a short time.

When I awoke, I felt the yetzer hara turning to me, pretending to worry for my health. I heard an inner voice telling me, "You shouldn't go to pray today in the Beit Knesset. You are tired and weary, all your bones ache. Besides, you didn't sleep the whole night and Chazal tell us that an onus (a person compelled) is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvot."

I was almost convinced by his argument and thought about praying at home by myself. But suddenly I remembered about this bachur who was taking his first steps closer to a religious way of life. I had invited him to come and pray with me today in the Beit Knesset! I imagined that he would probably come, as he promised. And if he wouldn't see me there, this might dampen his enthusiasm and connection with religion. Not wishing to take responsibility for this, I immediately pulled myself together and got ready to leave the house. Indeed, when I came to the Beit Knesset he was already waiting for me by the entrance with his hand outstretched to greet me. After the tefillah, I again spoke to him pleasantly and encouraged him in his mitzvah observance and love of Hashem.

This episode showed me the intense power of the yetzer hara, who stoops to any means in order to incite a person to slacken in his avodat Hashem. We must take great care not to let ourselves be enticed even once.

The Haftarah

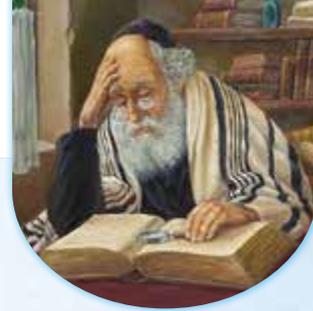
"The word that Hashem spoke" (Yirmiyahu 46)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about Pharaoh's punishment and the destruction of Egypt. The Parsha too speaks about the last three plagues and the destruction of Egypt.

Guard Your Tongue

A Heavenly Voice Rings Out

If a rumor goes around that somebody did something or said something not in accordance with the Torah, either a serious or even minor transgression, it is forbidden to accept and believe this information. One may only take precautions until the matter is clarified.



Words of our Sages

Segulot from Maran Sar HaTorah

"He will not permit the destroyer to enter your homes to smite" (Shemot 12:23)

In the sefer 'Beit Imi', the Rabbanit R. Tzivyon, daughter of Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita, describes how her parents received a large number of beautifully designed 'asher yatzar' cards from Rabbi Shimshon Halperin, for my mother to distribute to their many visitors.

Ima distributed thousands of these cards to all different woman, encouraging them to say the blessing word for word and with great concentration. (Ima also hung a placard on the wall, with the blessing written out clearly, and was particular to recite from this. Abba too is particular about this). She writes that her mother attested that women who took upon themselves to recite the blessing from the text and with concentration, merited great salvation. Ima recommended this segula for different problems, especially for digestive problems.

Ima told us the following story: A woman from chutz la'arezt came to see me and poured out her heart about several challenges that occurred to her one after another. I really wanted to help her, so I told her about the segula of 'asher yatzar' that has helped so many. I suggested to her that she should take upon herself to recite the blessing with concentration, from inside the text. I wanted to tell her about the great advantage of this blessing, but she excitedly claimed, "Who better than I knows about the great advantage of this segula!"

This is what the woman told Ima: "Half a year ago, my father became unwell and had to undergo a complicated heart operation. After the operation, the doctor came out to us and uneasily informed us that it was possible that our father was incapacitated during the operation, and will not have control of his needs. His words fell on us like a hard blow and we did not know what to do. Without any other solution, I decided that all I could do was pray to Hashem in Heaven. I also wished to accept something upon myself as a merit for my father.

Since I normally pray in English because I find it hard to pray in Lashon Hakodesh, I made a resolution to recite the asher yatzar blessing from the text, in Lashon Hakodesh. If I thought this was an easy commitment, I was soon proved wrong. It was actually very hard. Each blessing took me about half an hour, and sometimes I had to recite it in the middle of the night when my eyes were drooping with tiredness!"

"But," finished the woman, "the segula bore fruit and after about three weeks, my father recovered completely!"

Ima knew of a wide range of segulot and healing remedies for all different areas. I would like to stress that our family is most particular about the halacha of reciting the following prayer, before taking any kind of medication:

"יהי רצון שיהיה עסק זה לי לרפואה שלמה כי רופא חייבם אתה".

"May it be Your will that this act should grant me a complete recovery, for You heal ungrudgingly."

For toothache: This segulah comes from my grandfather, the Steipler: After reciting in Kiddush Levanah, "Just as I dance toward you but cannot touch you, so may none of my enemies be able to touch me for evil" one should add, "and may I (or so and so) not suffer from toothache".

Once the Savta Rabbanit Kanievsky had an acute toothache. Saba mentioned her name in Kiddush Levanah and immediately afterwards her pain subsided. Savta mentioned this to Abba, but warned him that he shouldn't speak about it. She was worried that Saba would become known as a miracle worker and then many people will come to him which would take him away from his learning.



Torah Study Brings Light

The plague of Darkness holds a wonderful, inspiring message for Am Yisrael.

Hashem wanted Bnei Yisrael to see the difference between darkness and light, between the Egyptians who sit in great darkness and Bnei Yisrael for whom there was great light, "But for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings". Hashem wished to impart a message to Bnei Yisrael, concerning their future spiritual continuity: They should know that it is not money that brings longed for happiness and it is not gold that brings light, for the Egyptians, with all the valuables that they possessed, lived a life of darkness and obscurity. For one who does not possess the Torah will never be happy and will never feel satisfaction despite his great wealth.

On the other hand, Bnei Yisrael had "light in their dwellings", for in a short time they would stand at the foot of Har Sinai and receive the Holy Torah. And a great light shines on the one who possesses Torah and fulfills Hashem's commandments. Immense happiness fills his heart and he is joyful throughout his life. This is what Hashem wanted the Jewish people to realize: It is not worth it for them to chase after silver and gold for this ultimately leads to destruction, darkness and obscurity. One should only pursue Torah and mitzvot for it is this alone which affords happiness and one who occupies himself with this, merits a great light.

Indeed, the Jewish people took this message to heart and from that moment, shunned silver and gold, not falling captive to its glitter. During the plague of Darkness, the Jewish people entered the Egyptian homes and discovered all their hidden treasures and even though they could have taken whatever they wanted, they did not touch anything, for they understood that wealth does not have substance. Anyone who wastes time chasing after riches will simply end up in darkness.

The Sifsei Chachamim writes on the verse (ibid 12:36), "Hashem gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they granted their request", that "the Egyptians lent them their valuables against their will. For when the Egyptians saw that the Jewish people could have taken whatever they wanted during the days of darkness since there was no way they could protest, yet they desisted, this granted them favor in their eyes, so they agreed to lend them their possessions, even though it was against their will to do so."

This shows us that Bnei Yisrael did not run after the Egyptians' possessions, for they understood that one who runs after silver and gold, one whose head is immersed in wealth and in amassing a fortune, leads a life of darkness. On the other hand, one who runs after Torah and mitzvot, merits a life of happiness and light, "But for all the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings".

Pearls of the Parsha

Impossible to Distance Oneself from the Creator

"Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart stubborn" (Shemot 10:1)

There is a famous question that many ask: Why does it say "Come to Pharaoh" and not "Go to Pharaoh"?

Rabbi Chanoch Tzvi of Bendin, the son-in-law of Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Gur, the Sfat Emet, writes in his sefer "Yecha'en Pe'er":

My wife, the Rabbanit Feige, explained it in this way:

Hashem Yitbarach, as if, was calming Moshe in advance of his difficult mission of going to speak to the king of Mitzrayim, and says to him, "Come with me. Both of us together will go to Pharaoh..."

The tzaddik Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, offers another beautiful idea: Hashem did not tell Moshe, "Go... (to Pharaoh)", for one can never separate oneself from Hashem's presence! It is impossible for a person to distance himself from his Creator, since "the whole world is filled with His glory". Hashem therefore said to Moshe, "Come with me to Pharaoh, I am with you wherever you go!"

Pharaoh's Name Hints to the Plague

"Hashem said to Moshe, "Come to Pharaoh, for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants stubborn" (Shemot 10:1)

The Mefarshim wonder how Moshe knew to tell Pharaoh about the plague of Locusts since Hashem did not mention anything about this plague? Here is just one explanation:

The Chatam Sofer brings in the name of the Gaon Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli zya"א, that the letters 'בּוּמַן' (בּוּמַן), letters pronounced using the lips, are interchangeable since they are all uttered using the same source. So too the letters 'אָחַהּ' which are all guttural sounds, are also interchangeable.

So, if we change the 'פּ' of 'פּרעה' to a 'בּ', and the 'ע' to 'א', and then rearrange the letters, it will spell the word 'אַרְבֵּה', locust. Through saying 'בּא' 'פּרעה', Hashem was hinting to Moshe, put the letters 'בּא' into 'פּרעה'.

This explains the continuation of the verse, 'למַעַן שְׂתִי אֶתֵּי אֱלֹהֵי בְקִרְבּוֹ', translated as, "so that I can put these signs of Mine in his midst". The word 'אֶתֵּי' can also be translated as 'letters', meaning 'put these two letters (of 'בּא') in him', and you get 'אַרְבֵּה'. This is the plague with which you must now smite Egypt!

Learn from the Animal

"And our livestock, as well, will go with us" (Shemot 10:26)

The Malbim zt"l writes:

Our animals will go with us willingly, for they desire to be offered as sacrifices before Hashem, just as Chazal tell us that the bull that Eliyahu Hanavi offered ran happily to the altar, while the bull that the false prophets offered, refused to go to the altar, and from here we learn a lesson how to serve Hashem.

If an animal that does not possess intelligence, longs to be offered as a sacrifice for Hashem, how much more so should we human beings, who have been blessed with intelligence, long to serve Hashem.

It Does Not Refer to the Egyptians

"Please speak in the ears of the people: Let each man request of his fellow" (Shemot 11:2)

Since when is an Egyptian considered a 'fellow'?

The Vilna Gaon presents a novel idea: 'Fellow' does not refer to the Egyptians, but rather to the Jewish people. They were told to request silver and gold vessels from their fellow Jews, for when a Jew performs kindness with his friend, then in this merit, Hashem will influence the non-Jews to give to them too, measure for measure.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



In the middle of the Parsha, we find the wonderful miracle of "But against all the Children of Israel, no dog shall whet its tongue" (Shemot 11:7). One can ask why there is a difference between the reward that the frogs received and the dogs' reward? The frogs who sacrificed their lives and entered the ovens, merited remaining alive, as the Ba'al Haturim explains (Shemot 8:1), whereas we are commanded to throw carcasses and non-kosher meat to the dogs, until this very day. Why were the frogs given a reward that lasted only a few years, while the dogs' reward is valid for all their future generations?

Rabbi David of Tulna answers that from here we have a proof that controlling oneself from saying something hurtful to one's friend, is considered a much greater sacrifice than jumping into a fire for one's friend. So great is the power of silence. It says in the Midrash (Esther Rabba 6): "Rachel seized the spindle of silence. She saw her gifts (that she should have received from Ya'akov) in her sister's hand and remained quiet. Binyamin, her son, also seized the attribute of silence. His stone in the Breastplate was called 'ישפה', 'Yashfeh', which hints that although he was aware of the selling of Yosef, he kept quiet. The word 'ישפה' can be split up into two, 'ישפה', there is a mouth, yet he was silent."

The holy Rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov used to say: "When someone keeps his mouth closed even just once, and controls himself not to become angry, it is worth more than fasting a thousand fasts!"

Silence is a sign of inner strength. It is an expression of depth and a

manifestation of resolve and emotional stability. Silence is the peak of all attributes. We are familiar with the famous words of the Vilna Gaon, quoted in his letter in the name of the Midrash: "For every single moment that a person keeps his mouth closed, he merits the hidden light that no angel or creature can imagine!"

One Who Bays Like a Donkey is a Donkey

In the marketplace in the Old City of Jerusalem, stood a young boy holding a tray of warm bagels, which he wished to sell to earn a few coins. One of the merchants noticed that the tray looked extremely valuable. It seemed to be an antique piece, made of gold. Since he realized that the child who was holding the tray had no idea of its true value, he approached him and said: "My child, if you want, I will take all the bagels from you, together with the tray, and pay you one hundred shekels". The child was clever and thought to himself that if this man is offering to pay one hundred shekels, it must be worth at least one hundred and ten and so he refused the offer.

He decided to test how determined the man was to buy the tray. He made the following offer: If you want, we can make an exchange: If you give me your donkey, you can take the tray. The man's immediate agreement was a proof that the tray was obviously worth several thousand... He then told the man that he will carry out the exchange only if he demonstrates the noise that a donkey makes. The man immediately started baying like a donkey.

The child realized that if this person was willing to bay like a donkey in the middle of the crowded market place, it must be that the tray that he is holding is worth tens of thousands. "Listen to me," he told the merchant. "That's not the way to do it. Does a donkey stand on two legs?!" The man imme-

diately crouched down on all fours and continued baying loudly.

Meanwhile, tourists gathered around and started filming this unusual and amusing event. Now the child went further with his calculations and said, if he is willing to embarrass himself to such an extent, what I am holding in my hands must be worth several million. He then ended the give and take with his final clever remark: "Listen, you can get up... I don't do business with donkeys!"

"How foolish am I," thought the man to himself in disappointment, "Had I kept quiet from the beginning and only asked how much he wants for the tray with the bagels, it would already be in my hands. I bayed like a donkey, I am a donkey!"

The nimshal: We often come face to face with people to whom we have a lot to say. Or it could be that during an argument we think that we have the perfect retort. But it is important to understand that it is not always worth speaking up. Keeping quiet during an argument is more likely to bring blessing since, during a disagreement, one does not weigh up one's words and they can ultimately cause more damage than good.

Silence, then, is not only a way of staying away from sin. Keeping quiet is in reality a silent song. Not just a song but the most magnificent song, more beautiful than anything we have ever heard. Chazal tell us, which shira song holds up the world? "The world only exists for the one who constrains himself during an argument, as it says, 'He suspends the earth upon nothingness'". (The Hebrew word for 'nothingness', 'בלימה', can also mean 'one who constrains'.) When a person knows how to keep quiet for the sake of Heaven, when he is desperate to say something, to offer a sarcastic taunt or prove that he has the upper hand, but instead his silence shouts out for the honor of Hashem, this is the epitome of greatness!