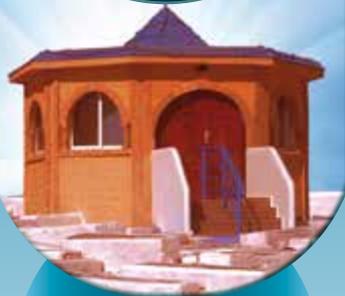


Mishpatim Shabat Shekalim

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Hilula

27 - Rabbi Chaim Bardugo

28 - Rabbi Vidal Angel, Ra'avad Yerushalayim

29 - Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel, the Saba of Slabodka

30 - Rabbi Meir, the Maharam of Padova

1 - Rabbi Tzedaka Chutzin, author of 'Meikitz Nirdamim'

2 - Rabbi Ben Tzion HaKohen Rabin

3 - Rabbi Eliezer De Abilla zya" a, author of 'Magen Giborim'

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, zya" a

MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Who May Ascend the Mountain of Hashem?

"Against the great men of the Children of Israel, He did not stretch out His hand – they gazed at Hashem, yet they ate and drank"

(Shemot 24:11)

On the day of the Giving of the Torah, Nadav and Avihu and the seventy Elders reached an exceptionally high level, where they could actually gaze at and see Hashem. The Torah adds that at the time when Nadav and Avihu saw Hashem's Shechina, they continued eating and drinking and were not overcome with fear and awe. Rashi quotes the Midrash Tanchuma: "They looked at Him with undue familiarity, while eating and drinking."

This incident gives rise to a perplexing question: How can it be that Nadav and Avihu, and the seventy elders who were exceptionally holy, ate and drank to their hearts content at the time when Hashem's presence was revealed to them? Any thinking person would clearly be paralyzed with fear and not capable of putting anything into his mouth in front of a human king, if so, how can it be that Nadav and Avihu, on their high virtuous level, did not show fear of Hashem and continued eating in front of Him, as if they were used to witnessing sights of this nature?

One can answer that this was certainly not profane eating, rather the kind of eating that can be compared to offering a sacrifice as it says, (Yechezkel 41:22), "This is the Table that is before Hashem". When the Kohanim ate in the Beit Hamikdash, the food that they put into their mouths was considered like a korban, as if their bodies were the Mizbeach on which a korban was being offered. Their eating was so holy, to the extent that their table was called "the Table that is before Hashem".

The claim against Nadav, Avihu and the Elders was for peeping and looking at Hashem's presence. Even though Moshe Rabbeinu, on his extremely elevated level, merited speaking face to face with Hashem, he never dared to look at Him directly, rather he would lower his eyes. Since Moshe was familiar with what it says, (Shemot 33:20) "no human can see My face and live", he was therefore most particular to lower his eyes to the ground and not look straight at Hashem. It is also brought in the Nevi'im that when the Prophets merited a prophetic revelation from Hashem, they would immediately fall on their faces to the ground, and this was so as not to gaze at the Shechina. Even though Moshe merited seeing the Shechina, he only saw the back of Hashem, wrapped in a Tallit, out of the greatness of His Holiness and Awesomeness.

In light of the above, the claim against Nadav and Avihu was not because they continued eating, since this was certainly holy eating. Rather Hashem was strictly protesting how they dared gaze at the manifestation of the Shechina. Even though Ahron's sons reached the high level of meriting to see Hashem, they should have

revered the honor and awesomeness of Heaven and not exploited this merit.

The story is told about the daughter of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol zya" a, who one day entered her father's study in order to get something. Surprisingly, she saw that there was another person in the room, whose identity was not familiar to her. When Rabbi Chaim noticed his daughter's presence, he leaped from his seat and exclaimed, "My daughter, why did you enter my study without receiving permission? The figure that you saw was Eliyahu Hanavi, of blessed memory. You beheld his countenance while not being worthy of such a privilege. Consequently, a harsh decree has been issued upon you; the eyes that beheld him will turn blind after your marriage, or alternatively, you may depart from the world, chas v'shalom..."

The holy Rabbi Chaim zya" a refused to hear of shidduch suggestions for his daughter, out of fear of bringing on her bitter fate. One night, Rabbi Khalifa Malka zya" a appeared to the holy Rabbi Chaim zya" a in a dream, asking him to wed his daughter to his grandson. Rabbi Chaim zya" a told him that he is afraid to marry off his daughter since it was decreed upon her to become blind in both her eyes after her marriage, for she beheld Eliyahu Hanavi. Rabbi Khalifa zya" a answered that his grandson will accept the decree from Heaven, come what may since he deems it a privilege to marry his exceptionally righteous daughter. The couple should marry and Rabbi Chaim should pray for mercy. Indeed, they were wed and ultimately, the terrible decree was annulled. The merits of their holy ancestors stood in their stead and Rabbi Chaim's daughter continued seeing normally. They both lived long lives and enjoyed generations of righteous descendants.

Upon hearing this story, I was surprised. If she merited seeing Eliyahu Hanavi and remained alive, does this not indicate that she was deserving of this privilege? If so, why was her father concerned? After deliberating on the matter, I concluded that Rabbi Chaim's zya" a concern was, that his daughter should not have looked at this 'study partner' since she knew that her father was learning alone and no one had entered the house. Since she did not control herself and gazed at something that she should not have, she was taken to task for this, for one must take care not to gaze at holy and sublime things, so as not to be harmed, chalila.

There is no natural way for a person to ascend the mountain of Hashem and settle there since it is a place where the Shechina rests and reserved for Hashem alone. But, if a person is careful with Heaven's honor and takes care not to look at Hashem's presence, he merits a special growth and elevation as a result of that caution. The example is Moshe Rabbeinu who was careful with Heaven's honor, therefore he merited that Hashem invited him to ascend His mountain.



תשס"ו



Walking in their Ways

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

Children as Guarantors

I am acquainted with a wealthy Jew, from whom I learned about the responsibility that rests on children's shoulders, as a result of their parents' deeds.

This wealthy Jew contributed generously to the needy and also immersed himself in Torah study. He was the embodiment of what Chazal call "Torah and greatness in one." He married off several of his children honorably and merited seeing grandchildren. Suddenly, the wheel of fortune turned in his disfavor. He lost all of his riches and became a destitute pauper.

He still had children at home whom he had not yet married off, as well as grandchildren who were used to enjoying his wealth. But now that he had lost all his money, his entire family had to get used to living in poverty.

"Why did this happen to me?" He bewailed his bitter lot. "I was always meticulous about giving tzedakah and doing favors for my fellow man, even above what I took for myself and my family. At the same time, I kept up a steady schedule of learning Torah. Why do I deserve this difficult test?"

I honestly did not know what to answer him. Do we know Heavenly calculations? But one thing I did know. There was surely a reason why he lost his assets. It was his moral obligation to vindicate Hashem's will and accept it with unconditional love. Who knows? Maybe this poverty came instead of other more difficult tribulations which had been decreed upon his family? Maybe it came to atone for sins committed in a previous lifetime? Upon pondering the trials of poverty which his children and grandchildren faced, I realized that it was because children are a person's guarantors.

When a person sins in any area, the Attribute of Justice demands that his children die, for they are a person's guarantors. But Hashem is all-merciful and therefore spares this anguish. Instead, he takes a person's property. The children are left penniless and thereby fall into the category of 'a poor person is considered as dead'.

This conduct is a great kindness from Hashem since due to their sins, many people would really deserve to be punished by seeing their children die. But in His great kindness, Hashem instead challenges them with the hardship of poverty, and through this, his children can remain alive.

The Haftarah

The Haftarah of the week: **"Yehoyada then sealed the covenant"** (Melachim II, 11)

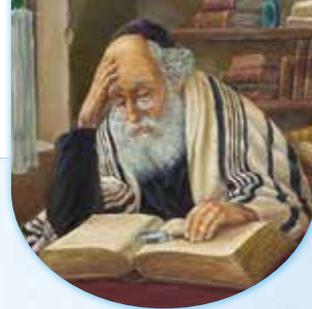
The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah talks about the shekalim which Bnei Yisrael donated for the upkeep of the Beit Hamikdash, which is related to this week, Parshat Shekalim, the Shabbat on which one announces about the shekalim that the Bnei Yisrael donated for the Beit Hamikdash.

Ashkenazim read from **"Yehoash was seven years old"** (ibid, 12)

Guard Your Tongue

A Negative Narrative About One's Wife

The prohibition of lashon hara includes speaking about one's husband or wife. There is no difference between speaking about one's wife or any other woman. Many people unfortunately, stumble with this and allow themselves to speak negatively about their wife, or their wife's family, to their siblings and family members. This is only permitted if there is some purpose in relating the matter, for the future, and he also does not intend to degrade the person.



Words of our Sages

Are You Familiar with the Thief?

"If a man shall steal" (Shemot 21:37)

The Gaon Rabbi Ben Zion Mutzafi shlita, quotes the prophecy of Ovadiah the Navi: "We have heard tidings from Hashem and a messenger has been sent among the nations... If thieves had come upon you, of plunderers of the night – how utterly are you cut off! – would they not steal [only] until they had enough for themselves?"

In his sefer, 'Doresh Tzion', Rabbi Mutzafi asks: Who are these 'thieves'?

It seems that we know them well. A person leaves his house for the Beit Kneset, on the way he meets a friend and stops to exchange a few words. When he finishes the conversation, he hurries to the Beit Kneset and just about manages to recite the Shemone Esrei prayer with the congregation.

He doesn't understand what the problem is and excuses himself: I left my house on time, why am I guilty that I met a friend? It would not have been nice of me to just brush him off with a quick hello, I had to stop and talk to him for a few minutes. Is it my fault that my friend didn't let me go?

So we present him with this question: If you were on the way to work, would you also allow yourself to stop and chat with a friend? Why, when it comes to spiritual matters, do you give yourself leeway? Would you dare come late to work because a friend stopped you to talk? You would be embarrassed to excuse yourself with these kinds of justifications. So why when it comes to the honor of Heaven, do you feel comfortable offering these excuses?

A person finishes reciting the Shemone Esrei prayer and while saying 'Uvo l'Tzion', he removes his tefillin. When the congregation is up to 'Ein k'Elokeinu', he has already removed his tallit, and before they have a chance to recite 'Aleinu l'shabe'ach', he has left the Beit Kneset. What can he do, he is in a rush! But what happens on the way home? He meets a friend, stops to chat with him and this little talk ends up taking a quarter of an hour. Suddenly he is not in a rush, it is awkward for him to cut the conversation short.

In contrast, we ask him: "If thieves had come upon you, of plunderers of the night". If you were standing in the street talking to your friend, and suddenly thieves would come and snatch your wallet, would you also then continue talking to your friend, because 'it's not polite'? You would immediately stop the conversation and chase after the thieves, shouting out loudly, "Thieves! Thieves!" Here there is no room for embarrassment and no room for considerations of 'not pleasant'. There are thieves and you need to retrieve your stolen money.

Alternatively, if thieves would break into your home in the middle of the night and steal expensive jewelry, what would you do? You would jump out of bed and run barefoot in the streets, with your pajamas, crying out loudly. You wouldn't waste a second even to change into normal clothes, every second makes a difference, it is not the time to weigh up any feelings of 'not pleasant'. So why, when it comes to spiritual matters, do you not behave at least as you do when faced with material concerns?



Pearls of the Parsha

Selling Himself Should Be Viewed as a Punishment

"Then his master shall bring him to the court and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever" (Shemot 21:6)

Rashi writes, "Why is the ear pierced rather than any other limb? Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai said, this ear that heard at Har Sinai, 'You shall not steal', went and stole, so it should be pierced."

Seemingly, because of this reason, it would seem fitting that his ear be pierced immediately as a punishment for the theft. Why is his ear pierced on account of saying that he does not wish to go free after working for his master for the requisite six years?

The Maharil of Diskin resolves this question: The reason why this thief is sold as a servant, is because he does not have the means to pay back what he stole. Since having to be sold is considered as a punishment, the Torah did not want to punish him twice. But once he says that he doesn't want to leave, this shows that becoming a servant was not a punishment for him at all. This is why his ear is pierced at this time as a punishment for his theft.

Lying for the Sake of Saving a Life

"Distance yourself from a false word" (Shemot 23:7)

Chazal established that there are certain cases where it is permissible to deviate from the truth, for example for the sake of peace and in other similar situations.

As a demonstration of this Chazal, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita told over the following story, which he heard from his father zt"l:

At the time of the war, anyone found without a passport was in grave danger and would be shot. It once happened that two bachurim set out, one of them possessed a passport yet the other one did not. Suddenly they noticed a soldier approaching them. The bachur who owned a passport told his friend that he should remain where he is, while he himself will run away. As soon as he took off, the soldier began chasing after him until he caught up with him. He demanded to see his passport, which he willingly presented. The soldier then asked him why he ran away. He replied that he has a digestive disorder and his doctor ordered him to run for two hours every day. The soldier then asked: You saw that I was chasing after you, why did you not stop?

What was his reply?

I thought that you also had this sickness...

Discreet Help, Without Witnesses

"When you lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you" (Shemot 22:24)

The word 'רַמְעַ', who is with you, seems to be superfluous?

The sefer 'Lekutei Hamelitz', written by Rabbi Meir Laniado zt"l, offers a beautiful explanation: The Gemara says (Chagigah 5a), that one who gives charity to the poor must do so secretly. However, one who lends money to his friend, should do so specifically in the presence of witnesses, for if not, he transgresses the prohibition of, "You shall not place a stumbling block before the blind", for the borrower may forget about the loan and deny that he borrowed money.

The precise wording of the verse expresses this idea clearly: 'עַם בְּסֶף תַּלוּהוּ', when you lend money to My people, meaning if you lend money to your friend, you should do so with 'עִמִּי', meaning in front of witnesses. But if you are donating charity to the poor, this should be carried out discreetly, which is implied by the wording, 'אֶת הַעֲנִי עִמָּךְ', specifically 'with you', and not in front of others.

Treasures

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



Levels in the Attribute of Emunah

"The appearance of the glory of Hashem was like a consuming fire on the mountain-top before the eyes of the Children of Israel"

(Shemot 24:17)

When Hashem wished to give Bnei Yisrael the Holy Torah, He commanded Moshe to ascend the mountain which was enveloped in a cloud, and Hashem's appearance was revealed to him inside a fire. The question is, we do not find anywhere any kind of reaction to Moshe Rabbeinu's presence inside this fire. Yet Moshe Rabbeinu, a human being, survived for forty days and forty nights inside this fire without anything happening to him. This amazing occurrence demands some kind of astonishment and admiration.

Conversely, when Avraham Avinu was thrown into the burning furnace in Ur Kasdim, the entire world expressed their amazement when Avraham emerged unharmed from the fire. I was wondering why concerning Avraham, everyone was excited about his miraculous rescue, while Moshe Rabbeinu spending so many days and nights inside the fire was not the cause of any reaction. What is the difference between these two incidents?

One can answer that there is an essential difference between the fire of Torah and an earthly fire. While an earthly fire burns and consumes, the fire of Torah does not only not consume a person, but on the contrary, it actually bestows him with life.

Chazal say (Berachot 63b): "Torah only endures through one who kills himself for it". This means that if a person subdues himself to the Torah and considers it his priority, then he merits that the fire of Torah will burn in his bones and give him life. On the other hand, the earthly fire of lust which possesses the physical property of burning, has the power to remove a person from this world, and from the Next World too.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Harav Eliezer Turk shlita quotes Maran Hagaon Rabbi Elyashiv zt"l, who says that the topic of 'Eved Ivri', a Jewish bondsman, is the wonder of wonders. In every country throughout the world, where the law is defined according to non-Jewish rulings, harsh punishment is meted out to thieves. Sometimes the presence of only one witness is enough to pronounce them guilty, and this could even be a relative or someone prejudiced, and even circumstantial evidence is enough to punish. These severe rulings stem from a simple and rational supposition, that if not for these punishments, "a person would swallow his fellow alive".

However, as far as we, the Jewish people, are concerned, the Torah tells us that a thief is only obligated to pay if there were two witnesses. And even in this case, if he admits the theft before the witnesses arrive, he is exempt from the fine. Besides, even if he was found guilty, if he doesn't have the means to pay, he is sold as a servant. And then, not only is he exempt from finding the money to pay, but he is now afforded a life of comfort! His master is obligated to feed him with good food, just as he is accustomed to eating, and he must dress him in the same quality clothes that he himself wears. The 'thief' has no financial worries about how to support himself and his family.

One who contemplates this will certainly wonder: If this is the situation, what will deter the thief from stealing? How will order be retained in the world? People will prefer to steal in order to 'merit' "he shall be sold for his theft" when he is then freed from the burden of parnassah and able to live a comfortable life on the account of his master?

But Harav Elyashiv points out something wondrous: From here we see that the Torah is teaching us an important and fundamental point: We should not

establish the gallows and the sword of punishment as the threat which will deter thieves from committing crimes, for this is not what will stop them, help them change their essence and once and for all stop transgressing.

On the contrary, what will, in effect, cause them to stop stealing, is actually the pleasant way in which they are treated, the honor and sensitivity which they are accorded. This, together with being influenced by the good qualities that they see in their master's home, the basics of following in the path of the Torah and having faith in Hashem, is what will be responsible to ensure that order reigns in the world. This is what will bring to a dearth of stealing!

The opinion of ba'alei batim is in direct contrast to the opinion of da'at Torah. This is the Torah outlook on this topic!

The topic of the Eved Ivri is, in fact, the classic example of good middot!

Hagaon Rabbi Michal Zilber shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of Zvhil, testifies about the conduct of his master, Maran Hagaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski zt"l, author of 'Chazon Yechezkel'. He witnessed the special treatment which Harav Abramski accorded his household help.

Every so often he would call her over in the middle of her work, and tell her to rest for a bit. He also told her that in general, it would make him happy if she would work slowly and with ease, rather than exhausting herself by working quickly. This was his wish, even though working slowly meant that he had to pay her more since she was paid by the hour.

This considerate conduct with which Harav Abramsky treated his domestic help, certainly enhanced her view of a Torah way of life, as she witnessed its pleasant ways. This approach of treating each person with equal honor, no matter their status, is what brings peace and harmony to the world.

Maran Hagaon Rabbi Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz zt"l, in his sefer 'Imrei Da'at', imparts a lesson culled from his years of experience in the area of chinuch:

"I am telling you, from established evidence and tens of years of experience, that the true foundation of a person,

how he determines his future and sets himself up for life, is not ascertained by his talents or other things, rather it is only his middot that determine how he will live his life! If a person has good middot, then he has a promising future. And if chas v'shalom his middot are not up to par, he is far from achieving anything. He might give a different impression, but in reality, he is very far from any true qualities."

Rabbi Michel continues with an amazing statement: "This is what we heard about and saw in all the Gedolim of our time, and in all the famous leaders of the previous generation too. Their core foundation was good middot!"

We quote the powerful and piercing words of the Vilna Gaon, brought in the introduction to the sefer 'Even Shlomo': All avodat Hashem is dependent on perfecting one's middot, which are like the clothes for mitzvot and rules of the Torah, and all sins are rooted in (bad) middot and the main reason for a person's existence is so that he should continually strengthen himself in breaking his middot, and if he does not do so, why does he deserve to live?!"

The Gaon and tzaddik, Rabbi Dov Yaffe zt"l, the Mashgiach of 'Kfar Chassidim', used to frequently urge his students with a wonderful statement: "A person can choose to live in the Gan Eden of good middot, yet in place of this he chooses to live in the Gehinom of bad middot. Tell me, is this not a shame?!"

This idea implies that a person who displays good middot is the first one to gain; it is as if he is living in Gan Eden: He experiences no anger, no grudges, no sadness, no worries, no jealousy and no hatred. But in place of this, he chooses to corrupt his middot, on the chance of bettering things for himself or in order to gain some small benefit. But in fact, he is the first one and the main one who stands to lose out from his behavior; his life is a like a life of Gehinom, full of anger and loaded with hatred and resentment.

"Tell me, is this not a shame?!" The Mashgiach's piercing question continues to echo...