

Ha'azinu

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Hilula

8 – Rabbi Shlomo Bechor Chutzin

9 – Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik
of Brisk

10 – Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi Ashlag,
author of 'Hasulam'

11 – Rabbi Shlomo Bachbot

12 – Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zvhil

13 – Rabbi Shaul Adadi

14 – Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky

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"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Avodat Hashem Alone

"Hashem alone guided them, and no other power was with them"

(Devarim 32:12)

Moshe Rabbeinu warns Bnei Yisrael and is adamant that in order to feel Divine Intervention which imparts Divine Providence on every single element in creation, in the sense of, "Hashem alone guided them" as if each person is like the solitary creation in the world, it is incumbent upon a person to feel towards the Creator that He is the only Ruler in the world and besides Him, there is no other power. G-d forbid a person should never vacillate with one half of his heart feeling love for Hashem Yitbarach while the other half is immersed and given over to the love of materialism and the lusts of this world, which are considered as 'other powers'. If a person does not devote all his love solely for the Creator, Blessed Be He, and does not feel the reality of Hashem being the Only Ruler of the world, he loses his ability to feel Hashem's love for him and His Divine Providence.

If one stands in prayer before Hashem but at the same time one's head and heart are deep into a business deal which one has to close that day, one will not feel any warmth in his prayer. He will certainly lack the delightful pleasure of 'Hashem alone guided them', since there is 'another power', in the form of money and other materialistic concerns which occupy a significant place in his thoughts, and can even cause him to desire them greatly and cool off his Avodat Hashem.

Moshe Rabbeinu wished to impart the message to Bnei Yisrael that arriving at this understanding will bring them true peace of mind and tranquility, since one who adopts for himself this way of thinking will merit Hashem's guidance in all his ways and it will grant him Heavenly Assistance and Divine Providence wherever he turns. There is no greater tranquility and true peace of mind than the knowledge that everything that is done to you or happens to you is a result of special intervention from Above. This is what leads to serenity and peace of mind, knowing that all that happens to him is determined by Hashem.

A person is obligated to repeat to himself this pure outlook of Hashem's supervision, as in the concept of 'Hashem alone guided us', and G-d forbid one may not combine an outlook of 'other powers'. To our sorrow, we find many people who are accustomed to vacillating between the two sides. On the one hand, their hearts wish to be connected to Torah, but on the other hand, their Yetzer Hara diverts them to progression and modernization which have become like 'other authorities' since they have the power to distance a person from Hashem and cause a coolness and disregard for Torah and mitzvot, r"l.

How painful is it to see those people whose passion for This World causes them to lose their deeply-rooted Jewish identity, until they start acting just like the Gentiles. When it comes to Avodat Hashem, their hearts have become frozen over and they no longer have the ability of feeling pleasure in performing a mitzvah or on hearing an interesting idea on the Parsha. Woe to the person who by combining materialism in his life, arrives at a situation where he no longer feels the true pleasure of Hashem's Providence in the world and the intensity of the sweetness which exists in the Holy Torah.

The Ben Ish Chai (Shana Rishona, Ha'azinu) explains at length that the above verse refers to the future, the time when Hashem's Kingship will reign over everything, for then Hashem alone will guide the world and there will be no other foreign powers. In the future, the reality that exists in the world today will change in an unrecognizable way and all mankind will see Hashem's miraculous conduct with their own eyes (see Yeshaye 11:9, Yirmiya 31:33), when "Hashem will be King over all the land and on that day Hashem will be One and His Name One" (Zecharye 14:9). It says in Ketuvim that at this time the kingdom of the wicked will speedily be uprooted and the third Beit Hamikdash will descend from Heaven ready-constructed without requiring any toil from Am Yisrael. When the Beit Hamikdash will descend from Heaven in all its glory, Hashem's Kingship will be revealed in all its splendor and all will recognize that Hashem alone guides the world and there are no other powers.

In those future days, good and blessing will intensify to such an extent in the world, that a wolf will dwell in peace with a sheep and no man will fight against his brother, as it says (Yeshaye 2:4), "Nation will not lift sword against nation and they will no longer study warfare". It is also written in Ketuvim that Hashem will bestow a special and miraculous blessing on the ground, so that man will just place seeds in the ground and ready-to-consume bread will immediately sprout. Man will place seeds of flax in the ground and a ready-to-wear garment will immediately emerge. In addition, if he places a single grape in a corner of his home, he will immediately receive a whole barrel of choice wine. These are wondrous things that are hard for us to fathom, living in the reality of today's world.

So that a person should indeed believe in all that is written and said about the end of days, already today he must feel Hashem's special conduct which guides and sustains the entire world. When a person believes and feels with all his heart that Hashem alone is sustaining the world without any other additional powers, it will help him to believe in the miraculous reality which will occur in the future when Hashem's Kingship will rule over everything and all will see that Hashem is One and His Name is One.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Life in Ruins

A couple in Lyon experienced a devastating car accident. The medics who arrived on the scene and saw their demolished car were sure that there would be no survivors. But by some miracle, the couple emerged alive.

When I came to visit them in the hospital, the husband emotionally told me, "Honored Rav, before the accident, I was a non-believer. But during the accident, I clearly felt Hashem's hand saving myself and my wife from certain death. Now I am an avid believer!"

I was sure the man would make a complete turnabout in his life. He would certainly begin observing Shabbat, kashrut, and other mitzvot. But only two weeks later, I was most disappointed to find him driving his car on Shabbat.

At first, I found it hard to understand how this Jew had the audacity to desecrate the Shabbat. This man was pulled out of the ruins by Hashem Himself and admitted it. How could he then go and blatantly scorn the mitzvot?

But on reflection, I realized that this incident contained a lesson for me. When a person is aroused to repent, he should not satisfy himself with mere thoughts or even statements of repentance. Rather, he should perform an actual mitzvah, such as beginning to observe Shabbat, going to the Yeshiva to study Torah, or strengthen himself in some other area.

Only a concrete act of holding on to one of the mitzvot will allow a person to maintain the inspiration that he felt. Only an immediate and practical application can transform the awareness of the moment into eternal arousal, which will advance him in his Avodat Hashem.

The Haftarah

"Return, Israel" (Hoshea 14, followed by Micha 7)

The connection to Shabbat: This Haftarah is read on 'Shabbat Shuva', the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It speaks about the idea of repentance and these are days of repentance and atonement for Am Yisrael.

Guard Your Tongue

Do Not Flatter

One who speaks lashon hara in order to flatter the listener, transgresses "You shall not bring guilt upon the land" (Bamidbar 35:33), which according to many Ga'onim is considered as the Torah prohibition of flattery. Also, if he hears lashon hara and so as to flatter the speaker he shows his agreement and even adds negative words, he too has transgressed the prohibition of flattery.



In Our Father's Path

Listening to Other People's Hardships

Shabbat Shuva falls in the middle of the Ten Days of Repentance, a time when we seek to increase our merits and find ever more advocates to stand at our side. It appears that one of the greatest defense counsels can be found in the conduct that we wish to highlight in this column, and that is "One who shows white teeth (i.e. one who smiles) to his friend is greater than one who gives him milk to drink". Listening to one's friend with a pleasant smile and genuine interest, is what gives him a good feeling.

An example could be someone who does not put the phone down when an embittered person wishes to pour out his heart, or someone who does not tell his family to say that he is not at home... Rather, he is fully present to listen to the needy person and in this way he merits performing a true act of kindness.

Hagoan Hatzaddik Rabbi Aharon Toisig shlita (Kevodam Shel Yisrael) relates that he merited hearing many times from the holy mouth of the 'Be'er Ya'akov', the Nadvorna Rebbe zt"l, that Hashem merited him with a special gift. When someone comes to speak to him about a matter that is weighing on his heart, once he has related the first few details, he already grasps the rest of what he wishes to say. Despite this, he continues listening to him for many hours.

He explained the reason behind his prolonged listening to matters he has already grasped: "I require merits to be able to respond correctly to all those who seek my advice. So through dedicating my precious time, even though I know all the details of the persons' problem, I thereby cause each person to leave my room with a good feeling. This is noticed by Heaven and in return, I am awarded the siyata dishmaya to answer correctly and with good counsel."

When a friend, teacher or any person listens to someone else and is present one hundred percent, detaching himself from any disturbances such as phone calls and giving him a good feeling, he thereby creates a wonderful atmosphere which can generate remarkable and blessed results!

This does not mean that one should ignore an urgent phone call. It is fine to pick up the phone but it is worthwhile saying initially, "I am waiting for an urgent phone call, it might be that I'll have to stop in the middle."

When the one seeking help senses your sensitivity and consideration, it will leave him with a wonderful feeling.

We say in the morning prayers, "To listen, learn and teach". As a play on words, knowing how to listen requires much training and teaching. Once one has acquired the art of listening, not much more is required to effect a transformation.

In the Shemoneh Esrei prayer, we say about Hashem, "You hear the prayer of each mouth". Hashem gives ear and hears to all our prayers, even though He is aware of all our requests even before we open our mouths. This is how we should relate to others. We should listen to them and hear them out with patience until they get everything off their chests.



Pearls of the Parsha

The Result Can Be Seen as Time Passes

"May my teaching drop like the rain, may my utterance flow like the dew" (Devarim 32:2)

When rain or dew drops on a vegetable patch, Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa zt"l points out, the beneficial effect on the vegetables cannot be noticed immediately. At that moment, one does not see any change, but after some time when the vegetables begin growing well, we understand that it was the rain that had watered them which enabled them to grow and thrive.

It is the same with man who studies Torah and fulfills Hashem's mitzvot. The blessed influence cannot be noticed immediately, only after some time when we note the person's noble middot, this causes us to exclaim, 'How pleasant are his ways! How refined are his deeds! Fortunate is his father who taught him Torah, fortunate is his master who taught him Torah!' We then acknowledge the great blessing that his Torah study and mitzvah observance afforded him.

The Gas Chambers in the Concentration Camps

"Bloating of famine, battles of flaming demons, cutting down by the noontime demon" (Devarim 32:24)

The sefer 'Umatok Ha'or' brings the following allusion, in the name of Rabbi Mordechai Neugroschel shlita:

It is well-known that the verses in the Parsha of Ha'azinu allude to the period of the Holocaust. For example, the verse "They provoked Me with a non-god, angered Me with their vanities" (ibid 21). When did Am Yisrael "provoke Me with a non-god"? Part of Europe in the early twentieth century was atheist, not everyone believed in the Creator of the world.

The Torah details the terrible punishments that they will suffer during this period: "I shall accumulate evils against them, My arrows shall I use up against them. Bloating of famine, battles of flaming demons, cutting down by the noontime demon, and the teeth of the beasts shall I dispatch against them, with the venom of those that creep on the earth" (ibid 23-24).

What is the meaning of 'קטב מריר', cutting down by the noontime demon? Rashi explains that it refers to names of demons.

The concept 'קטב' appears in Tehillim (91:6), "Nor the pestilence that walks in gloom; nor the destroyer (קטב), who lays waste at noon". The Malbim writes on this verse, "The destroyer: As we find 'קטב מריר', which is poisonous air that kills. Here lies an allusion to the Holocaust when the Germans used poison gas to murder Jews.

Changing Status: Children or Servants?

"When Hashem will have judged His people, He shall relent regarding His servants" (Devarim 32:36)

Surely when Hashem judges His people, this includes His servants? So why the repetition, "He shall relent regarding His servants"?

Rabbi Amor Abitbul zt"l, in his sefer 'Omer Hatenufah', answers this question according to the Chazal (Baba Batra 10a) that when Yisrael perform Hashem's will they are called 'sons' as it says, "You are children to Hashem, your G-d" (Devarim 14:1), but when they do not fulfill His will they are called 'servants', as it says, "For the Children of Israel are servants to Me" (Vayikra 25:55).

In reality, when a person repents for rebelling against the King of the World, it would seem that his repentance should not be accepted since the ruling is that even if a king is prepared to forgo the honor due him, his honor is not forgone. But since Bnei Yisrael are called 'children to Hashem', the ruling is that if a father forgoes his honor, his honor is forgone.

Therefore, when Hashem wishes to judge His people and accept their full repentance, He must annul their appellation of 'servants' since as long as they are servants He cannot forgo His honor.

This is the meaning of the seeming repetition in the verse, "When Hashem will have judged His people, He shall relent regarding His servants". When Hashem wishes to accept His people's repentance, He must relent regarding them as servants and instead consider them as children from now on. Then He is able to forgo His honor.

Treasures

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



This Too is for the Good

"The Rock! Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; a G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He" (Devarim 32:4)

Moshe Rabbeinu reproved Bnei Yisrael and asked incredulously how they could be so ungrateful to Hashem who did everything for them, "Is it to Hashem that you do this?" (ibid 6). Indeed, in a natural way, it is difficult to understand how Bnei Yisrael could ignore all that Hashem had done for them, to the extent that they turned their backs to Him and transgressed His Torah laws so offensively?

The explanation could be that indeed all Hashem's ways are just, for He is "a G-d of faith without iniquity", since "righteous and fair is He". But, so that we can indeed recognize Hashem's uprightness, we must have the correct outlook. When a person does not merit recognizing the kindness that Hashem does for him, it is because there is something wrong with his own vision, for Hashem is the essence of Goodness and therefore His entire goal is to do good with His creations.

If a person does not discern all the good that Hashem does for him and on the contrary, it seems to him that Hashem is dealing harshly with him, he must understand that in fact, it is not so. Just as we bless for the good, so we are required to bless for the bad (Berachot 54a) since ultimately the 'bad' too emerges as good for a person. It is only due to our narrow vision and shallow grasp that we are not capable of discerning this.

In this light, one can explain that Am Yisrael came to sin against Hashem since they lacked the understanding and correct way of looking at things, that Hashem was in fact doing constant good with them. Even when it appeared that Hashem was angry with them, His anger was for their sake and their good so that they should repent from their bad ways. Yet at the time they did not have the wisdom to understand and recognize this.

What emerges from this discussion is that all that happens to a person is good and beneficial, since all Hashem's ways are "just and without iniquity", it is only that we do not possess the wisdom to discern this. If we accustom ourselves to believe that all that happens to us is for the good, we will be able to thank for the bad just as we thank for the good, for hidden in every 'bad' situation is great good.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



"The Rock! Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; a G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He"

(Devarim 32:4)

Sometimes a person is overwhelmed by various events and he does not understand why they are happening to him. The above verse comes and declares that no injustice comes from Hashem!

This idea is demonstrated in the following story, brought in the sefer 'Marpeh Lenefesh'.

By the bimah of the Beit Knesset in Paris, stood Rabbeinu Yechiel of the Ba'alei Tosafot, wrapped in a tallit and holding the shofar.

The congregants tremulously anticipated the recital of the blessings in honor of the shofar blowing, but the Rav began with something else entirely.

He turned his head and with a slight hand gesture motioned to one of the congregants to approach. He quickly made his way among the congregants and stood at Rabbi Yechiel's side. The man was Naftali Azaryeh, a well-known goldsmith.

"Despite the significance of the hour, and maybe particularly because of it," began Rabbi Yechiel, "I see fit to share a story with you that contains an important lesson, a story that began a year ago and ended last night. In agreement with one of the incident's heroes, our dear friend Rabbi Naftali, I will now invite him to personally share the development of the events."

The congregants looked at Rabbi Yechiel and the goldsmith in astonishment, curious as to what they were about to hear. Naftali seemed nervous. He swallowed, cleared his throat in embarrassment and then began:

"Surely you are familiar with my good neighbor, my partner in craft, Ya'akov Abudaram. And so, several days before last Rosh Hashanah, we both returned from work and participated in a Torah shiur. In the shiur we learnt the Gemarah that "a person's sustenance is fixed for him from Rosh Hashanah."

These words sparked a special interest for

us. We spoke about the matter and decided to fast a special fast and ask Hashem to reveal to us how much we would earn in the coming year.

This is what we did. Two days before Rosh Hashanah, we fasted and then waited for some sign from Heaven.

On the last night of the year it happened. Each of us dreamt how much we would earn in the coming year. The next morning when we met, we told each other our dreams in astonishment. My friend Ya'akov dreamt that in the coming year he will earn two hundred zehuvim, while I dreamt that I would earn only one hundred and fifty zehuvim.

We decided to approach our master and teacher and tell him about the fast and the dream. "If you wish to take my advice," he began, "write down every single bit of profit, both major and minor, that you earn throughout the year." Of course, we accepted his advice and acted accordingly.

One day a harsh argument broke out between us, concerning merchandise that we had purchased jointly and sold at a nice profit. When it came time to divide out the profit, Ya'akov my friend claimed that we partnered in the deal with the consent that we would share the profits equally. On the other hand, I claimed that since I had invested two thirds in the deal while he had only invested one third, we should therefore share the profits according to the same ratio.

We turned to the Rav and asked him to rule our case.

"Where is the money that you earned from the sale?" he asked.

"Ya'akov has the money."

"Do you have witnesses or a document where you recorded the deal?" the Rav continued inquiring. We had neither witnesses nor a document. "If so, Ya'akov is considered as having the right of possession and Naftali must bring proof for his words. If Naftali has no proof, Ya'akov should swear that he is speaking the truth and then he deserves to get half the profit.

But Ya'akov refused to swear.

"Even though I spoke the utter truth, I am still not prepared to swear, therefore I am willing to forgo the share that I deserve," he said. Ya'akov then took only one-third of the profit for himself and gave me the other two remaining thirds. I had earned ten zehuvim more than Ya'akov with this deal.

We continued recording all our profits. A few days ago, as Rosh Hashanah was approaching, we took out our records and

summed up all our income. It turned out that Ya'akov had earned one hundred and eighty-nine zehuvim during the year, which was eleven zehuvim less than what he had been told in his dream. I myself had earned one hundred and sixty-one zehuvim, eleven zehuvim more than my dream had foretold.

We once again approached our Rav and told him how much we had earned. He did not think for long and quickly determined: "So it seems to be that in that argument about the deal, your friend Ya'akov was right and you should have shared the profits equally."

"So why then is there a difference of eleven zehuvim when the argument between us was only about ten zehuvim?" I queried, wishing to vindicate myself. Rabbeinu had a ready answer: "The cost of paying the scribe who wrote out the indictment and the messenger who arranged the time of the din Torah, was one zehuv." But the temptation was too great for me and I was not able to make peace with the sudden loss of eleven zehuvim, a considerably large sum.

"I do not believe in dreams" I concluded, and to quieten my conscience I added, "According to the proceedings of the din Torah that Rabbeinu ruled, I rightly deserved two-thirds of the profit."

We returned to our stores to complete several commitments before the Chag. Suddenly I noticed that Ya'akov's store was full of customers, while no one was entering my store. By that afternoon Ya'akov had earned eleven zehuvim. He closed his store and went home. Angry and indignant, I too made my way home. As I passed through the marketplace, I bumped into the stall of a glass merchant and knocked over some of his merchandise. Several objects broke and the owner began hitting me. I was quickly dragged to court. The judge sent an appraiser to the market to determine the value of the damage that I had caused... Eleven zehuvim, he determined! I then went home, bruised and humiliated and missing eleven zehuvim.

It was then clear to me that Rabbeinu was right and how great is our G-d! Still last night I went over to the house of my friend Ya'akov Abudaram and asked him to forgive me. After that, I approached Rabbeinu and related the revealing end of the story.

Full of emotion, Naftali Azaryeh left the bimah and Rabbi Yechiel began the order of the shofar blasts.