

Bereishit

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Hilula

29 - Rabbi Saliman Barzani, the Chacham Bashi of Kurdistan

30 - Rabbi Kalafeh Gig of Constantin

1 - Rabbi Chiya Fontrimoli, a Dayan in Izmir

2 - Rabbi Ya'akov Samaneh, a Dayan in Rakesh

3 - Maran Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, Chief of Mo'etzet Chachmei HaTorah

4 - Rabbi Kolonymous Shapira, author of 'Chovat Hatalmidim'

5 - Rabbi Moshe Bardugo, author of 'Rosh Mashbir'

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

The Edifice of Torah and Mitzvot is Built on Foundations of Faith

"In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth"

(Bereishit 1:1)

The foundation and root of the entire Torah is faith. Prior to the fulfillment of mitzvot and Torah study, man must possess complete faith in the Creator. This is the basis on which it is possible to build an everlasting edifice of Torah and yirat shamayim. This is why the Torah begins with Bereishit which speaks about the creation of the world, of heaven and earth and all they contain.

Our Sages teach us that the world was created through the utterances of Hashem. Hashem did not create the world through a work of craftsmanship or with a specific machine, but only through speech, as in "For He spoke and it came to be" (Tehillim 33:9). When Hashem said "Let there be light", light was immediately created, and so forth with every part of the creation. Look at how many factories, inventions and other sciences are in this world, and behind the materialization of all these stands millions of people who planned and designed their development. We must contemplate this idea and contrast it with the fact that Hashem created the world through utterances alone!

We often hear about scientists who complete their University studies and perceive themselves as all-knowledgeable, and this 'intelligence' brings them to deny the Creator of the world. But what can simple man grasp of this amazing creation that he can deny a Creator?! He comes with a claim that the world created itself... Everyone knows that something that is self-made is created crooked, even a tree that grows by itself will lean over to the side. If we want the tree to grow straight, we must support it with a rod. The world was created with such precision and exemplary order. Is it at all possible that this can happen by itself?!

A certain scientist once came to the Ibn Ezra and claimed that the world created itself. Noticing a beautiful painting in the room, he was duly impressed and asked the Ibn Ezra which artist created this beautiful piece of art. The Ibn Ezra replied with affected innocence that a cat bumped into in a jar of ink which then spilt onto the paper, and this is how the picture came about. The scientist was insulted and retorted, "Do you think I am a fool?" The Ibn Ezra replied, "And how can it be that such a beautiful world, sketched with such precision, can happen by itself?!" Therefore, a person's primary obligation is to instill complete faith in Hashem in his heart, that Hashem is the One who "spoke and it came to be, He commanded and it stood firm". This is the foundation on which a person can build an edifice of Torah, mitzvah observance, and good deeds.

Man must continue to strengthen and intensify his faith in Hashem also in his daily life, to know that Hashem watches over him with an open eye and that there is Divine Providence in every step of the path he takes in life. If he plans a certain schedule for himself but his day follows a different pattern, he should know that "the counsel of Hashem, only it will prevail" (Mishlei 19:21). It is Hashem who changed the course of his day. Sometimes Hashem does not fulfil a person's innermost desires, for He knows that it will not be to his benefit, and on the contrary, his present situation is the best thing for him. If G-d forbid a bad decree is pronounced on a person, he will not be able to evade and escape this decree. Even if he planned to take a certain path, Hashem will change his route to lead him to the place where he will meet his death r"l. As the Gemarah says (Succah 53a), "A person's legs are the guarantors to take him to the necessary destination". Who is the One who directs his legs? Divine Providence. Therefore, man must believe with all his heart that it is the Hand of G-d that rules all events, and that Hashem's ways are hidden from our eyes so that we do not know exactly what is good for us, but "Hashem will do what is good in His eyes" (Divrei Hayamim I, 19:13).

This is man's entire purpose in coming to This World, to fulfil the mitzvot and be a faithful servant to his Creator and withstand all the challenges that stand in his path. The Parsha tells us (Bereishit 3:1), "Now the serpent was cunning beyond any beast of the field that Hashem G-d had made". Chazal say that the snake said, "I know that Hashem said 'for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die'. I will go and deceive Adam and his wife and they will eat (from the Tree of Knowledge) and be punished, and then I will inherit the Earth for myself."

Seemingly, if the snake was so cunning and was able to seduce Adam and his wife not to listen to Hashem's command and implant heresy in them, why did Hashem choose the snake to wait on Adam and Chava? Was there not a dearth of more suitable creatures that could have served them? But just as we explained, the main purpose of man's descent to This World is so that he should know to withstand the trials and be successful in overcoming the stumbling blocks that the Yetzer Hara sets up in his path. Therefore, Hashem specifically chose the snake to serve Adam and Chava so that it should try to deflect and seduce them from the correct path, so that the trial should be greater and more formidable, and thereby Adam and his wife will emerge more powerful by resisting the temptations of the Yetzer Hara. Although the outcome was different, the immensity of the test is not diminished.



Walking in their Ways

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

Shabbat Kodesh U'Mevorach

The grandson of the liturgical poet and tzaddik Rabbi David Chasin zya"l, was seriously ill and hovering between life and death. For an entire month, the family beseeched me to visit him in the hospital and bless him, but unfortunately, due to my many obligations and the needs of the public, I was unable to do so and despite my strong desire to pay him a visit, it was pushed off again and again.

About a month later I finally found the time to visit him and approached his hospital room.

I knew that his situation was grave and that he was unconscious and connected to different life-support machines. Despite this, the family rejoiced when they saw me and came to greet me, asking me to enter the patient's room and bless him.

I entered his room. Now I could see for myself how close he was to death and I was filled with deep sadness, for I understood that although it was not my fault, I had come too late. In my great distress, I stood and prayed for him from the depths of my heart, after which I left the room.

I had just left his room when I heard the patient's wife running after me and calling excitedly:

"Harav, Harav, my sick husband suddenly began to speak. He asked to eat something after weeks of not being able to put anything in his mouth! Honored Rav, please bless my husband again, surely this blessing will have the power of healing him from his illness."

I once again blessed the patient and wrote my blessing on a paper, as I am accustomed to doing so as to give the blessing validity and strength. For some reason, at that moment the words "Shabbat Kodesh u'mevorach" stood before my eyes. So I added these words to my blessing. I then folded the paper and handed it to the family.

After Shabbat, the patient passed away and I understood in retrospect why the words "Shabbat Kodesh u'mevorach" had suddenly come to mind when I blessed him. It was a hint that his death would follow his delighting in Shabbat, as indeed was the case.

The Haftarah

"Yonatan said to him, *"Tomorrow is the New Moon"* (Shmuel I, 20)

The connection to the Parsha: The day following this Shabbat (Sunday) will be Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan. This is the connection to the Haftarah in which the verse says, "Tomorrow is the New Moon".

Guard Your Tongue

The Prohibition of Lashon Hara

The definition of lashon hara is speech that degrades someone or speech that can cause someone harm. If someone speaks negatively about his friend, this is called lashon hara even if it is clear that it will not cause any harm to his friend. The actual occupation with someone else's shortcomings is forbidden in and of itself.

Telling over something that may cause someone harm, whether financial, physical, emotional or any other form of damage, is considered as lashon hara, even if what he says is not necessarily negative.



In Our Father's Path

A Jewish Soul Strives for Good

"This is the account of the descendants of Adam" (Bereishit 5:1)

The Holy Zohar says that two angels accompany man wherever he goes and these angels are certain strengths that a person receives from his intellect. Each person is embedded with the power of holiness, and in contrast, he also contains the power of impurity. The power of holiness comes from the holy soul, as we say in the morning blessings, "My G-d, the soul You placed within me is pure". The intention is that Hashem gave man a soul that is compared to 'breath', (the Hebrew word for soul, הַמָּשָׁנִי, contains the same root letters as the Hebrew word for breath, הַמְיִשָּׁנִי), and just as man cannot survive without breathing, so he cannot survive without a soul.

The Gaon Rabbi Yissachar Meir zt"l, explained to his talmidim that there are heretics who claim that man does not possess a soul, therefore by nature he does not strive to benefit others unless it will result in some personal advantage for him, for example, if it will bring him honor or he will be repaid for this good in the future, and other similar benefits.

The truth is that there is no concept of 'chesed shel emet', true unbiased kindness, among the nations of the world, as the Gemarah (Baba Batra 10b) says: "Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai said to his talmidim, my son, what is the meaning of the verse (Mishlei 14:34), 'Charity will uplift a nation, but the kindness of regimes is a sin'? Rabbi Eliezer answered and said, 'Charity will uplift a nation' refers to Yisrael as it says (Shmuel II, 7:23), 'And who is like Your people, like Israel, a unique nation on earth'. 'But the kindness of regimes is a sin', every act of charity and kindness the Gentiles do is considered as a sin for them since they only do it to brag about it."

This teaches us that the Gentiles perform acts of charity only when it benefits them with personal pleasure. But this is not the case with Bnei Yisrael, since they strive to do good even if will bring them no benefit or pleasure. When a Jew performs a charitable act for his friend, he derives pleasure and satisfaction from the actual deed, therefore he tries to carry out his kind deeds in secret, in a way that no one will be aware of his actions, even including the recipient of the good, and it is this that affords him the greatest pleasure.

There are Jews who sacrifice themselves to give charity secretly without any thoughts of recompense or pleasure, and this is the meaning of the verse, "Charity will uplift a nation", the Jew is elevated through his mitzvah of charity and the act itself is that which brings him great satisfaction.

Many Jews who strive to go in Hashem's ways fulfill the dictum, "Just as He is Merciful so you should be merciful". There is a proliferation of chesed organizations among religious Jews. When, G-d forbid, someone has to undergo an urgent operation, there are those selfless individuals who will invest much effort in helping him with whatever he requires, without thought of compensation. These people enjoy doing chesed without fanfare and without a write-up the next day in the newspaper, "So and so did such and such". They act for Heaven's sake and their pleasure stems from the actual deed of chesed. However, this is a pleasure that can be felt only by one who possesses a G-dly soul, for the soul strives to come closer to its Creator.

There is a now-religious Jew who lives in Bnei Brak who works for the medical organizations. He has strong connections with the consulate, and when he picks up the phone to the embassy and says, "It is so and so speaking", the embassy immediately sets aside all its affairs and makes sure to sign the visa and all other necessary documents of approval for flying a sick patient to America.

The medical organizations also have a strong relationship with the airline companies and when it is necessary to arrange a flight for a patient, even in the middle of the night, they call up the different companies who meet their request and make room for the patient on the next flight.

This is an entire enterprise of chesed that is carried out not for the sake of receiving a reward. This is the power of the G-dly Jewish soul that strives to do good.



Pearls of the Chag

Who Sustains Who?

"Let us make Man" (Bereishit 1:26)

Chazal ask, "Why was Adam created last of all the creation? The answer is, if he merits, we say to him, you preceded the creation, (meaning, being the pinnacle of creation everything was created before him and for him), if he does not merit, we say to him, the mosquito preceded you".

Rabbi Yitzchak of Varka explained this with an apt mashal:

There are two kinds of wagon drivers: Concerning the first one, Hashem wishes to provide him with a livelihood therefore He sends him a horse and wagon. The second wagon driver is of a different category: Hashem who sustains the entire world wishes to sustain the horse, so He sends him a wagon driver who will take care of his needs...

The two wagon drivers have the same source of livelihood, but what a great difference there is between them!

While for one, the horse works for him, for the second, he toils his entire life for the horse...

This is the meaning of the Midrash: Why was man created last? If he does not merit we tell him the mosquito preceded you, you were created so as to sustain the mosquito with your blood...

The Creation of the Woman Was Hashem's Wish Alone

"Then Hashem G-d fashioned the side that He had taken from the man into a woman" (Bereishit 2:22)

In the morning blessings, the woman recites the blessing, "for having made me according to His will". One explains this by saying that she is expressing acceptance of the judgement, meaning that the woman would not have agreed to be created in this way, but this was Hashem's will.

The sefer 'Avnei Zikaron' offers a different intention. On the contrary, the woman is giving praise to Hashem Yitbarach for being created a woman. Why does she prefer to be a woman? For when Hashem created man He said to the angels, "Let us make Man", and Rashi explains that Hashem as if took counsel with the ministering angels to teach us that the greater one should always consult with those lower than him as if the angels were partners in the agreement to create man. However, the creation of the woman was done by Hashem alone and this is why the woman recites the blessing, "for having made me according to His will".

The Difference Between the Fruit and its Juice

"The woman said, 'The serpent de-

ceived me, and I ate'" (Bereishit 3:13)

What kind of answer is this that the woman said, "The serpent deceived me" (in the sense of tempted me), surely she should have listened to Hashem's command and not to the words of the snake?

Furthermore, the Midrash brings that Chava squeezed a bunch of grapes and gave the juice to Adam (some commentaries hold that the Tree of Knowledge was a vine). Why she did not offer him the actual grapes?

Rabbi Shlomo Meir Pariente zt"l of Tunisia, in his sefer 'Imrei Shefer' asks this question and offers the following answer:

The Gemarah (Rosh Hashanah 12b) brings that a person who vows not to eat grapes, is permitted to drink wine that is produced by squeezing grapes. This is different from other prohibitions such as orlah (eating fruit within the first four years of planting the tree) where the wine squeezed from grapes is forbidden just like the fruit itself.

Taking this into account, it could be that the reason why Chava squeezed out the juice of the grapes and gave it to Adam to drink, was at the 'advice' of the snake who proved from the law of making vows that one is only forbidden to eat the fruit itself, while one may drink the juice that is extracted from the fruit. The snake misled Chava since this ruling is only applicable to vows where we go according to the person's words, but with other prohibitions, there is no difference between the fruit and its juice. Therefore, since Adam was forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, the juice of its fruit was also prohibited. This is what lies behind Chava's answer of "The snake deceived me".

Honoring One's Wife is a Segulah for Wealth

"By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19)

The Gemarah (Baba Metzia 59a) says that Rava commanded the people of Machoza to honor their wives so that they should become wealthy, since honoring one's wife is a segulah for wealth.

What is the connection between the two ideas?

The Maggid Rabbi Elimelech Biderman shlita explains that the woman was given the curse, "he [the husband] shall rule over you", while the husband was cursed with "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread". This being the case, Heaven says, if you do not force her curse on her, of "he shall rule over you", and instead you show her respect and appreciation, measure for measure you too will not be pressured with your curse of "by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread" and you will merit wealth...

Treasures

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



The Importance of Continuity in Spiritual Elevation

Continuity in Avodat Hashem without cessation and breaks is an essential element in serving Hashem. We learn this concept from Adam Harishon who was Hashem's own handiwork and who achieved elevated and sublime levels. Chazal say (Sefer Avoseinu 22) that Adam Harishon walked around in Gan Eden just like one of the angels and studied Torah with Hashem, as it says (Bereishit 2:15), "and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it".

What is the implication of "to work it and to guard it"?

To work the garden through the study of Torah and the performance of positive commandments and guard it by refraining from forbidden activities.

Adam Harishon was so holy and pure that the creations make a mistake and thought him to be a god, even coming to prostrate themselves before him. Adam said to them, why are you bowing to me?! Let us go together and crown as King over us the One who created us. Adam himself went ahead and crowned Hashem as King, and they all answered after him, "Hashem has reigned, He has donned grandeur".

If Adam Harishon was on such a great and holy level, how did he dare transgress Hashem's wish and violate His command by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, an act which resulted in such terrible destruction for the entire creation? Why was he unable to control himself and overcome his inclination evil?

The answer is because he interrupted the continuity of his spiritual elevation and Torah study. Had Adam Harishon continued his occupation in the Torah that he studied with Hashem in Gan Eden even when at home, had he not taken a break, the Yetzer Hara would certainly not have had the power to overcome him. But when Adam returned home after studying Torah in Gan Eden and immediately began having a regular conversation with his wife Chava, which severed the continuity of his learning, the Satan immediately found a fitting opportunity to seduce him and defeat him with sin. Chazal have told us (Avot 3:9), "One who interrupts his review...bears guilt for his soul" since when Torah study is interrupted and there is no continuity, this Torah is at a great disadvantage. (Taking a rest to renew one's strength is not the same as interrupting.)

That is why we read this Parsha specifically following the Days of Awe, to teach man that he is forbidden to halt the spiritual growth that he merited during these holy days. Immediately following Yom Kippur, he should add more holiness and purity to his soul and strengthen himself in Torah study and mitzvah observance with more courage and with more vigour. If he is lazy and says, I will take a break and wait a short time and then I will resume my spiritual growth, in the end, he will lose everything and who can discern his end, as indeed happened to Adam Harishon.



TIMELY MESSAGE

Shabbat is the source of blessing and this particular Shabbat that stands before us is doubly special for its unique inherent powers. On this Shabbat, we merit beginning the Torah anew and it is the first Shabbat after the Chagim when we return to the routine of reading from the Parsha of the week. It holds a precious and powerful treasure and is capable of effecting the final redemption and the arrival of Mashiach!

Let us then strengthen ourselves intensely in guarding this rest day, and thereby open up the gates of redemption and blessing!

Rabbi Asher Kovalski shlita relates the following story about his grandfather the banker, Rabbi Shmuel Strauss z"l.

It was a Friday morning, in Karlsruhe, Germany and Rabbi Shmuel was about to leave for another day's work in the bank that he owned. Since he had been invited to a Brit Milah which would take place immediately after work, he decided to wear his Shabbat suit to work so that he would be able to go straight to the celebration.

As was his daily custom, at the end of the day's work Rabbi Shmuel collected together all the money that was in the bank to take it to his home. Rabbi Shmuel put the bundles of cash into his jacket pocket and then left the bank to go to the Brit.

After the seudat Brit, Rabbi Shmuel rushed home and began preparing for Shabbat. He later left for the Beit Knesset which welcomed him with its uplifting atmosphere. After the Friday night prayers and hearty blessings of 'Shabbat Shalom', Rabbi Shmuel gathered his guests and children and set off for home.

While he was walking home, he was suddenly taken aback by a feeling of heaviness in his jacket pocket. What could it be, he immediately asked himself? Overcome by an instinct of fear, he put his hand inside his pocket and discovered the hidden treasure. All the money that he had col-

lected from the bank that morning, was right there in his pocket!

He was shocked. He stood rooted to the spot and for a short moment a battle played out in his heart. To continue home with all the money in his pocket? Was it permitted? Forbidden? There is no way he can continue walking while carrying money in his pocket! On the other hand, it was clear to him that discarding the money right here meant the loss of a certain fortune!

The battle waged for but one moment. After that, with his face shining with the joy of a mitzvah, he moved half a step to the side of the road and shook out the contents of his pocket onto the ground. With every bundle that fell his smile grew wider, with every ruble that rolled to the ground another stone rolled off his heart. When his pocket was empty, he felt great relief, immense joy, and mainly, a deep feeling of excitement. He had finally merited sacrificing something substantial for the sake of Shabbat. Hashem prepared for him an opportunity to forgo a fortune for the sake of the holiness of Shabbat!

His steps grew lighter and he entered his home as if in a dance. He did not share the incident with his family members since he suspected that maybe one of them might take it too hard. They might feel upset about the lost fortune, which will impede their Shabbat joy. Not so Rabbi Shmuel. He rejoiced at the opportunity and Shabbat passed by with a great spiritual uplift, he was captivated by the holiness of Shabbat!

On Motzei Shabbat, Rabbi Shmuel gathered his family together and told them that they had become paupers. "It sounds distressing," he said immediately, "but the truth is, there is no news more joyful than this. I sacrificed all my wealth for the sake of Shabbat, I left all my money completely abandoned in the main street of the town. I am moved to tell you that we merited sacrificing for the sake of the Shabbat day, how fortunate are we and how good is our lot!" he called out, and invited his children to join him in a dance to celebrate the mitzvah, singing "They shall rejoice in Your kingship, those who observe the Shabbat and call it a delight"...

The family members delighted in their shared joy. They had merited losing a for-

tune, they sacrificed all their wealth for the sake of the beloved Shabbat. Is there a more sublime merit than this?!

Nevertheless, when the moving and joyful occasion came to an end, Rabbi Shmuel considered the fact that he might be obligated to put forth some effort, to return to the place where he had abandoned his money and see if anything was still left. It definitely seemed unreasonable and illogical, such a huge sum lying at the side of a main thoroughfare for twenty-four hours in a city teeming with thousands of Gentiles, what chance is there that the money will still be there? Nevertheless, why not try...

He took a small torch and set off for the location. Right in front of his eyes that grew round in astonishment, was all the money lying there on the ground. Sorted bundles of crisp notes, everything was lying there, in exactly the same spot, as if a hidden sheet had covered the money for the last twenty-four hours and no one had noticed it!

He bent down to the ground and picked up wad after wad, another bundle and another bundle. He stood and counted the money and discovered that there was not one ruble missing. All the money was there, no one had touched it!

With extraordinary excitement, he quickly ran home and once again gathered all his family together. "I have good news to share, not as good as the previous news but still good news!" he announced. "When we gathered previously I was happy to announce that we sacrificed all our money for the sake of Shabbat, we were excited at the news that we had lost all our wealth for the sake of guarding the holiness of Shabbat. Now I discovered that the blessed Shabbat day guarded the blessing of money, and I found all the money, there is not a penny missing!"

From that Shabbat on, Rabbi Shmuel's many business ventures flourished with exceptional success. Whatever he touched merited unusual Heavenly blessing. He became well-known as an extremely wealthy individual. The blessing of Shabbat is what brought blessing to his business and granted him the greatest business deal of all!