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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Da'at Torah - an Important Principle in Avodat Hashem

"Then Yehuda approached him and said, 'If you please, my lord'"

(Bereishit 44:18)

Our Sages (Midrash Rabba 93:2) quote the following verse, "For behold the kings assembled, they came together...Trembling gripped them there" (Tehillim 48:5), and expound: "For behold the kings", this refers to Yehuda and Yosef. "They came together", both were filled with wrath against each other. "Trembling gripped them there", this refers to the tribes who said, 'Kings are debating with each other, why should we interfere in their conversation. It is fitting for a king to debate with a king'. That is why it says, "Then Yehuda approached him", he alone approached him while the rest of brothers stood to the side."

It is necessary to understand why indeed the other tribes did not deem it necessary to be part of the argument between Yehuda and Yosef. There is no doubt that they too had what to say, and they too, would be able to contend with Yosef about the false charge of stealing the goblet, so why did they remain quiet?

To reconcile this, we will take note that throughout these Parshiot it is clear that the crown of kingship was given exclusively to Yehuda. Meaning that the other brothers unanimously decided to crown Yehuda as king and ruler over them. They would unreservedly accept his authority without deviating in the slightest from his opinion in all matters and would proceed according to his direction.

This was the case after the brothers sold Yosef to the Ishmaelites, an act that was carried out according to Yehuda's instruction. The verse says, (ibid 38:1), "It was at that time that Yehuda went down from his brothers". Rashi writes, "This teaches us that his brothers deposed him from his position of leadership when they saw their father's intense grief. They charged, 'You told us to sell him. Had you advised us to return him to our father, we would have listened to you.'" This shows how all the brothers relied on Yehuda's word and considered his every decision as sacred because they had crowned him as king over them.

Ya'akov Avinu, too, trusted only Yehuda because he knew that he was the ruler and leader and that all followed his orders and opinions. When Reuven promised his father that he will take responsibility for Binyamin's return from Egypt and will be a guarantor for his welfare, Ya'akov was not placated by his words. But once Yehuda stepped forward and said (ibid 43:9) "I will personally guarantee him; of my own hand you can demand him", Ya'akov immediately agreed to send Binyamin for he knew that Yehuda was considered as the king of the brothers and he can rely on him.

In the future too with the coming of Mashiach, the scepter of kingship will remain in the tribe of Yehuda, as it says (Bereishit 49:10), "The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda nor a scholar from among his descendants until Shiloh [Mashiach] arrives". For just as the tribes accepted Yehuda as king over them, so too Heaven agreed that the tribe of Yehuda will continue the kingship for eternity, and Mashiach too will descend from him. This is the sovereignty that was unanimously and indisputably accepted by all the holy tribes.

Now we understand why the brothers did not intercede in the discussion between Yosef and Yehuda. This was because they considered Yehuda as their king and themselves as subordinate to him, accepting his authority and opinion as Da'at Torah. The brothers were of the opinion that since they have the sacred Da'at Torah of Yehuda which they unquestionably accept, there is no reason for them to open their mouths and offer their own opinion. In light of this, even were they to have a particular opinion on the matter in question, they would have kept quiet and left the matter in Yehuda's hands because everything was under his authority.

This is an important principle in Avodat Hashem. Every Ben-Torah must be submissive to the Da'at Torah of his Rav and defer to his all-encompassing opinion. Even if it seems to him according to his narrow-minded reasoning, that his Rav's opinion is surprising, difficult to understand or seemingly incomprehensible, he is nevertheless forbidden to object. Rather he must accept his opinion in complete innocence as if it was a command given to Moshe at Har Sinai. As it says (Devarim 17:11), "you shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left". Chazal expound on this (Sifri), "Even if he tells you that right is left and left is right, you must obey him". This is the way in which the holy tribes conducted themselves, seeing only the sacred opinion of Yehuda in front of their eyes and accepting it unreservedly as if it was given at Sinai. Therefore, when they saw him debating with Yosef, they saw no need to intervene for they considered it inappropriate for them to express their opinion and intercede in the matter in front of their king, Yehuda, for they would accept whatever Yehuda would say to Yosef. This is the reason why they stood to the side.

This clarifies why, as if, only Yehuda showed strong opposition to Yosef and risked his life to save Binyamin. Because he was the ruler of the tribes and responsible for Binyamin, that is why he was the one to approach Yosef and in fact, spoke in the name of them all.

It is every Jew's obligation to defer to his Rav's opinion at every step of the way in his life. Even if he does not merit fully understanding his Rav's counsel, this does not exempt him from accepting his authority and behaving accordingly.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Blessing in Advance

During one of my visits to Argentina, I was receiving the public in the Beit Hakneset 'Saban'. The wife of the Rabbi of the congregation approached me and emotionally related that her husband and son had been miraculously saved from a horrific car accident. Besides for some minor scratches, they emerged unscathed.

To demonstrate the tremendous miracle, the wife showed me pictures of the car after the crash. It was nothing but a piece of scrap metal. It was very hard to believe that anyone came out alive.

She then removed a piece of paper from her handbag. This was the paper on which I had written, seven years earlier, a blessing for the success of her family. For some reason, on the other side of the paper, I had written the word 'Bamidbar', underlining it twice for emphasis, despite that week being Parshat Acharei Mot.

I was very moved by the sight of this paper. When I had written this word, I had no idea what made me do so. Now, everything fell into place. It was a hint to the car accident that took place during the week of Parshat Bamidbar. And the two lines under the word obviously indicated that there would be two survivors, the father and the son who escaped without a scratch.

The woman added an interesting postscript. They had actually lost this piece of paper, and immediately after the accident, she found it in a most surprising way. She was also amazed by the fact that the accident occurred near the Beit Hakneset 'Saban', where the blessing had been written seven years earlier!

Hashem's ways are hidden from us. How marvelous is His intervention! He arranged that the father and son should be blessed seven years in advance, thereby being saved from certain death.

The Haftarah

"The word of Hashem came to me...Now you, son of man" (Yechezkel 37)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the kingdom of Yehuda and the kingdom of Yosef which will unite in the future, as is written: "Now you, Son of Man, take for yourself one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yehuda and for the Children of Israel, his comrades; and take one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yosef...', and they will become united in your hand."

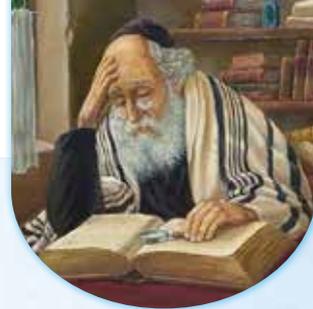
The Parsha too speaks about Yehuda who fought to save his brother Binyamin and how eventually all the brothers united with Yosef Hatzaddik who ruled over the entire land of Mitzrayim.

Guard Your Tongue

When It is Well-Known

Negative words are considered as lashon hara even if the matter is public knowledge. The reason is that the actual act of speaking ill about someone else is forbidden.

For example, it is forbidden to repeat derogative words that appeared in the newspapers about certain Jews. The media often publishes information based on hearsay, therefore it is forbidden to believe the matter if the newspaper is the only source of this information. Even after verifying the matter, it is still forbidden to relate it to someone else.



In Our Father's Path

One Cannot Take Someone's Anchor Without Offering a Replacement

When the heart of the educator and his student merge with the verse, "since his soul is bound up with his soul" (Bereishit 44:30), many educational issues fall into place. We have chosen to focus on an example of this ideal conduct, by relating an incident that took place about fifty years ago. There was a student from the Ponevezh Yeshiva who found no satisfaction in his Torah study. He was attracted to a religious youth movement, finding fulfillment in the opportunity to lead and enjoy various activities. Since the Yeshiva demanded a total commitment to Torah study and the student found himself unable to comply, he soon found himself outside its walls.

He was accepted by a different Yeshiva but there too he continued his involvement in the youth movement which led to a confrontation with the Yeshiva staff. They too demanded emphatically that he leave behind all his outside connections and engage in Torah study alone.

A friend who was concerned for his fate if he would be thrown out of this Yeshiva too, consulted with Maran the Chazon Ish zt"l and asked his permission to bring this bachur to him so that the Chazon Ish could speak to him.

Permission was given and the friend persuaded the bachur to meet with the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish welcomed him warmly and asked him what they are presently studying in the Yeshiva. He hardly knew which Masechta they were studying, for his foremost concern was the youth movement and spent the rest of his time involved in confrontations with the Yeshiva staff.

The Chazon Ish took his answer in stride, and with tremendous sweetness began reviewing the words of the Gemara and opinion of the Tosafot. His words were illuminating and enjoyable.

Suddenly the Chazon Ish surprised them with a significant question on the words of the Tosafot. They tried to reconcile it but did not succeed. The Chazon Ish smiled and said, "Don't worry, go back to Yeshiva and think about it. Ask your Rabbanim, look it up in different sefarim and come back to me when you have an answer".

The Chazon Ish wished them much success and they took leave of him. They made their way back to Yeshiva and as soon as they arrived, the friend returned to the Chazon Ish and expressed his surprise, "I did not bring him to you so that you should speak to him in learning?!" The Chazon Ish replied with a revealing answer: "One cannot take away someone's anchor without replacing it with something else".

"If the youth movement is where he finds gratification and he is told to break off contact, even if he obeys he will fall into depression and despondency. This is not the way. One must direct his passion to accomplish, direct the fire and transform it into the fire of an Altar. How can this be done? If he acquires taste in learning, if the learning challenges him, he will then be capable of forgoing his involvement in the movement, with understanding and in agreement." It is unnecessary to point out that the advice was beneficial and today this bachur is a Rosh Yeshiva.



Pearls of the Parsha

Several Stances in the Descent to Egypt

"They came to Egypt, Ya'akov and all his offspring with him. His sons and grandsons with him, his daughters and granddaughters and all his offspring he brought with him to Egypt" (Bereishit 46:6-7)

These verses seem to be repetitive, points out Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zya" a in his sefer 'Or Hachaim'.

He explains that the repetition is a declaration that there was a difference among Ya'akov's offspring in how they came down to Egypt. Some came willingly, wholeheartedly accepting the king's orders, while others were concerned about entering the melting pot of Egypt.

Since this was the case, the verse details who exactly were the ones who willingly went to pay the debt of exile, by saying, "his sons and grandsons with him", meaning these he did not have to bring, they came on their own accord just as he did. After that, it mentions those who did not come willingly and Ya'akov had to bring them down against their will. That is the meaning of "his daughters and granddaughters and all his offspring he brought with him", these were the ones who he brought with him to Egypt for they did not come out of their own free will.

Good News Contains an Aspect of Eliyahu

"Asher's sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serach" (Bereishit 46:17)

Serach, daughter of Asher, was the one who announced to Ya'akov "Yosef is still alive", as the Targum Yonatan explains.

In this connection the sefer 'Me'or Einayim' (Parshat Vayeitzei) offers the following Kabbalistic explanation: "If a person receives good tidings, including when he is baffled over a difficult matter when learning, before the idea comes to his mind, he feels a form of notification entering him. He feels senses that a certain raw element has entered his mind, and this is called 'the aspect of Eliyahu'. This is followed by 'the earth will be filled with knowledge'. Meaning that his mind expands and is filled with vitality, and then it becomes easy for him to devote his different properties, including the aspect of his legs, to the good.

For in truth, one who relates good tidings, is as if he is clad with a spark of the aspect of Eliyahu, because he is the one who announces all good tidings in the world and this spark simply slots into the one who is relating the news, because the aspect of Eliyahu is a concept from the Six Days of Creation which later on was enrobed in Pinchas, as we know.

That is why when one has the opportunity to relate good tidings, every person should fortify himself to run and tell them, for his soul feels an aspect of Eliyahu and wants to establish it within himself. Even though people do not feel this, nevertheless the mazal feels it, and if he would have the wisdom to use this inspiration to serve Hashem with that aspect of Eliyahu that he is now adorned with, he can use it to reach ever-higher levels.

Similarly, a spark of Eliyahu also enters the one who is informed of the good tidings. His mind and perception expand and he too can easily cleave to the Creator."

The Selling was Carried Out with a Hidden Hand

"He saw the wagons that Yosef had sent" (Bereishit 45:27)

The Admor of Gur zt"l, author of 'Beit Yisrael', offers the following allusion: After Yosef Hatzadik revealed himself to his brothers he sent his father wagons, and as Rashi points out, "Yosef directed his brothers to say that the last topic he and Ya'akov had studied together was that of 'eglah arufah' [the calf whose neck was broken in expiation of an unsolved murder]. The word 'עגלות', wagons, can also be translated as calves, thus alluding to that topic. Therefore, it is written, 'And he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent' and does not say ...that Pharaoh had sent".

What message was Yosef trying to relay? In the section of 'eglah arufah' it says "it was not known who smote him" (Devarim 21:1). This is what Yosef was implying to Ya'akov: Even if it seems to you that the brothers sold me, the truth is that we cannot know. You will never know who smote me and who sold me, for everything emanated from Hashem's hand.

Treasures

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



The Essence of Life is Eternal, Spiritual Life

"I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt" (Bereishit 45:4)

It is necessary to understand why Yosef repeated the words "I am Yosef". In the previous verse, Yosef announced, "I am Yosef. Is my father still alive?" and immediately afterwards he again said to them, "I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt". Why was once not enough?

As we know, Yosef Hatzadik was taken to Egypt, a place full of the impurity of avodah zara and sorcery, as a young lad of seventeen. He was all alone, without any support from his family, cut off from his father and mother. Simple logic assumes that the natural outcome would be for him to embrace the impurity of Egypt and leave behind his religious way of life, forgetting all the Torah that he learnt from his father in his youth. But with tremendous self-sacrifice, Yosef closely guarded the holiness and purity of his soul and despite finding himself in a land full of lewdness and abomination, he was extremely careful not to draw close and learn from the evil ways of the Egyptians.

Yosef Hatzadik remained close to Hashem during his entire sojourn in Egypt. He also courageously withstood the difficult test with the wife of Potifar, for Yosef knew that Torah, mitzvot, and Yirat Shamayim are not acquired offhandedly, but only with self-sacrifice and dedication to one's goal. This is the only way to merit the spiritual acquisition of Yirat Shamayim and holiness and purity of the soul. By saying "I am Yosef", he was implying, "I continue drawing on the live connection to my father, as in 'I am Yosef. My father is still alive [within me]'.

After that Yosef once again repeated to his brothers, "I am Yosef your brother, it is me, whom you sold into Egypt". I am Yosef who spent time in our father's presence, studied Torah from his mouth, and imbibed his holiness. And even now in Egypt, I am the exact same Yosef. "I am Yosef" before you sold me, and "I am Yosef" after the selling too. Yosef who is utterly attached to Hashem and His pure Shechina, is standing before you.

When the brothers heard this they were astounded at the extent of Yosef's self-sacrifice. Even though twenty-two years of being subjected to the impurity of Egypt had passed, he nevertheless guarded his holiness and religion, and Torah and mitzvot remained his way of life. That is why, "But his brothers could not answer him because they were left disconcerted before him". His holy face testified to the holiness of his pure body.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



The Mussar commentaries describe at great length the penetrating message that can be derived from Yosef's rebuke to his brothers, to the extent that they were left disconcerted and could not answer him. For example, this incident teaches us about the laws of rebuke between man and his fellow. The Torah describes "but his brothers could not answer him", and we must learn the correct form of accepting rebuke.

In Yerushalayim, there was a veteran melamed and eminent educator called Rabbi Nechemya Beker zt"l. He passed away at a ripe old age, after meriting raising upright students over tens of years. In his youth over seventy-five years ago, Rabbi Nechemya studied in the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikva. The Rosh Yeshiva at that time was Rabbi Eliyahu Dushnitzer zt"l, about whom the Chazon Ish zt"l declared that he was one of the thirty-six hidden tzaddikim of the generation.

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer "Otzroteihem Amaleh" quotes Rabbi Nechemya who relates an incident that he was involved in at that time:

One Shabbat afternoon, Rabbi Nechemya was walking through the paths of the moshava settlement (as it was in those days) on his way to Yeshiva. After a few minutes, he noticed Rabbi Eliyahu standing next to a building and raising his eyes to one of the apartments, while one could make out on his pure face that something was bothering him.

Rabbi Nechemya greeted his Rav with Shabbat Shalom and asked politely: "Is there any way that I can help?" Rabbi Eliyahu looked at him

and asked, "Maybe you can tell me who lives on the second floor of this building?"

The young Nechemya apologized and replied that he has no idea who lives in that apartment, but could not contain his curiosity as to why Rabbi Eliyahu was interested in finding out the identity of the occupants. In answer to his bewilderment, Rabbi Eliyahu turned to him in deep pain, "Every Shabbat I pass this street and every Shabbat I hear sounds of chilul Shabbat, r"l, coming from this house. I want to protest and I need to protest."

R' Nechemya did not understand the problem: "I am prepared to do this right away. I will go up there right now and make a big protest," his youthful spirit bubbling up, ready for action...

Rabbi Eliyahu was most alarmed on hearing this. He shook his head and told R' Nechemya with a severity that engraved itself in his heart and soul forever:

"This is not the way to make a protest! This kind of protest I can also do. But protesting is forbidden if it is not performed for Heaven's sake"...

"Sometimes," continued Rabbi Eliyahu in pain, "A person sets up a big protest against some organization or certain activities, and it could be that in truth there is a reason for concern and admonition. But the protestor is not acting for Heaven's sake! He is doing it only because he belongs to a certain group and the other one belongs to a different group. Or he is religious and the other group is not religious; he is from here and they are from there. There are all kinds of reasons why he is not pleased with their conduct, and although it seems that he is reproving him for this matter, his true intention concerns something else entirely. This is not the way to offer rebuke!"

"If so," asked Rabbi Nechemya, "how can a person assess if he deeds and rebuke are appropriate?" In other words, Rabbi Nechemya wished to hear how the Rav himself was accustomed to offering rebuke.

Rabbi Eliyahu answered, "Indeed, this is one of the hardest kinds of service! I myself am accustomed to writing my words of protest on a paper and leaving it with me for a day or two. If after that I see that the situation still truly pains me, I look at the note once again and verify thoroughly that the wording is still correct, not exaggerated or combined with personal matters. Only when I am convinced that the rebuke is sincere and true, do I send the note to its address."

"In this way", Rabbi Eliyahu concluded his instructive words, "I can indeed testify that my words serve their purpose and good things result from them. But if one does not rebuke appropriately, the matter is far from being beneficial at all."

From the wording of the rebuke that Yosef offered to his brothers, we see to what extent he acted out of love and affection for them. Immediately following the rebuke he continued speaking to them, "And now, be not distressed, nor reproach yourselves for having sold me here, for it was to be a provider that Hashem sent me ahead of you" (Bereishit 45:5). For on the one hand one must give rebuke where it is required, as Yosef did with all the intensity, sharpness and clarity, to the extent that they were unable to answer him and felt disconcerted before him. But on the other hand, he proceeded out of compassion for his brothers, his heart was pained to see them in this situation. This kind of rebuke indeed had a deep effect on the brothers!