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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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

A Person is Obligated to Overcome All Life's Challenges

"Ya'akov lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years"
(Bereishit 47:28)

Chazal say that those seventeen years that Ya'akov lived in Egypt were the best years of his life. This was because he merited witnessing how his precious son Yosef retained his righteousness even while in the foreign land of Egypt. Despite all the difficult challenges that Yosef endured, he retained his holiness and purity to the extent that he merited being adorned with the title "Righteous one, foundation of the world".

This is the implication of the verse (ibid 45:27), "And he saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to transport him, then the spirit of their father Ya'akov was revived". Rashi writes, "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". I would like to add that the word 'עגלות', wagons, can be split up into two words, 'ע' גלות', 'seventy, exile', implying that Ya'akov discovered that Yosef, his righteous son, merited engaging in the Holy Torah which can be interpreted in seventy languages, even during his exile, and that is why "the spirit of their father Ya'akov was revived".

This is the foundation that our Holy forefathers set down for us during their sojourn in Egypt. They paved the way and showed us that in every situation it is possible to study and grow in Torah, and even when a person is in exile surrounded by difficult challenges, then too, if he only desires, he can study Torah and engage in it with all his strength. The majority of the Torah (the Oral Law) that has been passed down to us from generation to generation emanated from those in exile. For example, the Talmud Bavli was compiled by the Holy Tanna'im and Amora'im at the time of the Babylonian exile, while the Holy Rashi and all the Ba'alei HaTosafot lived their elevated lives in France. The Rambam lived in Egypt and there were others too in all countries of the Diaspora. This shows us that man is obligated to engage in Torah regardless of his situation. He must overcome all life's challenges and divest himself of all his preoccupations so that he feels free to immerse himself in the tent of Torah.

Since Ya'akov Avinu a"h was aware that not everyone would be able to overcome the challenges as did his son Yosef Hatzadik, he therefore decided to establish a Yeshiva in Egypt from where they would merit drawing on Torah and fear of G-d. As it says (Bereishit 46:28), "He sent Yehuda ahead of him to Yosef, to prepare ahead of him in Goshen". Rashi cites the Midrash who interprets 'להורות' (to prepare) as 'to teach' which implies that Yehuda's mission was to establish a Torah academy which would impart instruction. For although Yosef Hatzadik merited maintaining his purity even without the atmosphere of a holy Yeshiva and merited ruling over his inclination, this is not a simple matter at all. Not every person is capable of achieving this level, and it could be that the difficult tests presented by Egypt, a country awash with lewdness and obscenity, were enough to make man fall into the trap of the Yetzer Hara, for it is extremely difficult to

abstain from sin. This is why Ya'akov wished to establish a Yeshiva in Goshen. It would serve as a lighthouse, with the holiness of the place shining light onto the tribes and their offspring and influencing them positively. In this way, they will be imbued with strength to guard their purity and holiness even when living in a gentile land.

This was the entire essence of Ya'akov's way of life. His heart's aspiration was to 'kill' himself in the tent of Torah. Even when he went to sleep he was engaged in Torah, as it says (ibid 28:16), "Ya'akov awoke from his sleep", on which Chazal expound, "Do not read 'from his sleep' (משנתו) but 'from his learning' (ממשנתו)".

How is it possible to study Torah while sleeping?

The answer is that if one considers Torah study as one's sole occupation, then even when sleep overcomes him against his will and due to his extreme fatigue from the toil of Torah he falls asleep, he is considered as compelled. In this case, the Torah considers it as if he is still engaged in Torah even while asleep. For in essence his soul desires Torah, and had he not fallen asleep he would strongly wish to continue his Torah diligence. However, since sleep is an inevitable necessity and cannot be ignored, and since he is sleeping contrary to his desire, the Torah considers it as if he is still engaged in Torah.

Just as Yosef Hatzadik guarded the purity of his soul, so too he instructed his pious children, Menashe and Ephraim, to conduct themselves in this way. This is why Ya'akov said to Yosef (Bereishit 48:20), "By you shall Israel bless saying, 'May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Menashe'". Rashi writes: "One who wishes to bless his children will bless them with this blessing. Each father will bless his son, 'May Hashem make you like Ephraim and Menashe'." It is necessary to understand why Ephraim and Menashe were singled out over the children of the other tribes, to the extent that they became the model for all Jewish children throughout the generations.

The reason is that the other holy tribes and their offspring were raised in the house of their holy grandfather, Ya'akov Avinu a"h. They lived their lives in a holy and elevated atmosphere, so it is no wonder that they merited becoming the holy and pure tribes of G-d. In contrast, Ephraim and Menashe were born and raised in Egypt, an impure and abominable land of idolatry, full of lewdness and abominations. Besides, Yosef's children had close connections with the Egyptian royalty, its ministers and sorcerers, due to the capacity of their father's position. Despite this, they maintained their holiness and purity and Ya'akov observed that they were not lured in the slightest by Egypt's impurity and did not learn from their ways and inferior behavior. On the contrary, their father Yosef raised them in the path of Torah and fear of G-d, to the extent that they were found fitting to be considered as one of the tribes, as it says (ibid 48:5), "Ephraim and Menashe shall be like mine like Reuven and Shimon". In spite of their lives being full of numerous and difficult challenges, they nevertheless overcame all the obstacles that stood in their path. They strode only in the upright way of their holy forefathers, as their father, the tzaddik guided them. With this in mind, each father blesses his children that they should always walk in the path of Torah and never learn from the ways of the sinners who surround us.



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Hilula

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author of 'Bnei Yissachar'

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20 - Rabbeinu Moshe Ben Maimon,
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author of 'Bnei Yissachar'



Walking in their Ways

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

The Mystical Significance of Wednesday

A famous philanthropist, well-known for his acts on behalf of Torah and chesed, found himself in a very difficult situation. His scholarly twenty-two-year-old son, of marriageable age, was considered a genius in his yeshiva, yet suddenly he was struck with a mental illness which intensified from day to day. He was eventually admitted to the psychiatric ward of the Tel Hashomer hospital, in critical condition.

The boy's illness completely broke his parents. They tried every means available to pull him out of his condition but to no avail. When they heard that I was in Israel, not far from their home, they decided to visit me with their son who was brought from the hospital on a stretcher in a special vehicle.

As they entered my room they burst into heartrending sobs. They bemoaned the fact that they had finally reached the stage where their son, a budding talmid chacham with wonderful character traits, was of a marriageable age when suddenly their world had turned black.

I looked at the stricken boy and then turned to his parents. "Did his illness begin on a Wednesday?" I inquired.

They racked their brains, trying to recall just when this calamity had struck them. Finally, they said, "Yes! It all started on a Wednesday!"

I thought for a while and then calmed them down. "Have no fear," I assured them. "B'ezrat Hashem, your son's malady will begin to heal tomorrow. Within the coming year, he will get married."

The reason I had asked whether his illness began on a Wednesday and not on any other day is that there is a special mystical significance to this day. A certain mighty Heavenly angel is appointed authority over this day, but now is not the place to go into details.

In any case, I realized that it was the impure forces which had wreaked havoc with this young scholar's mind and prayed for his return to normalcy.

In Tehillim (136:4) we read, "To Him Who alone performs great wonders." With Hashem's kindness, the boy slowly but surely emerged from his illness and was finally completely cured. He married a fine Jewish girl from a wonderful home. Together, they have established a true Torah home.

The Haftarah

"Kind David's days grew near to die" (Melachim I, 2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the death of David Hamelech a"h, and his final instructions to his son Shlomo. The Parsha speaks about Ya'akov Avinu's death and his testament to his son Yosef.

Guard Your Tongue

Differentiating Between Lack of Knowledge and Wickedness

The Holy Torah commands us, "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people" (Vayikra 19:15)

From the word 'your people' Chazal derive that one is prohibited to speak lashon hara about a Jew only when he acts in accordance with 'your people', meaning as long as he follows in the way of the holy Jewish people.

According to this, the prohibition does not include discussing the shortcomings of a cruel and evil rasha. However, one who sins out of lack of knowledge or because he was unable to withstand the temptations of the Yetzer Hara, is still considered as 'your people' and it is prohibited to speak lashon hara about him.



In Our Father's Path

Why Did Ya'akov Avinu Kiss Menashe and Ephraim?

It is a Jewish custom that children kiss the hand of the Sage who blesses them. The Remah of Pano writes that the reason for this is because the Sage writes Torah insights, and therefore his hand attains the status of a mitzvah object on which the Shechina rests. The Holy Zohar writes deep secrets about Sages who inscribe Torah insights at the side of their Gemara.

This shows us that there is validity to the custom of kissing the Sage's hand, and that of one's parents. But what is the source for the Sage kissing the one being blessed? And why did Ya'akov kiss Menashe and Ephraim?

The answer is, explains the sefer 'Doresh Tzion', that a Talmid Chacham can bless with just a gaze, and this is because his eyes have attained a holy status through studying Torah.

The Gemara (Chagiga 5b) tells about Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi who were walking and arrived at a certain town. They asked the local residents: "Is there a Talmid Chacham here whom we can go and greet?"

They answered, "There is a Talmid Chacham but he is blind".

Rabbi Chiya then said to Rabbeinu Hakadosh, "It is not befitting for you to go due to your status of being a leader of Yisrael, rather I will go and greet that Sage."

But Rabbeinu Hakadosh did not agree and went with Rabbi Chiya to greet the Sage. As they took leave of that blind Talmid Chacham, he said to them, "You greeted a face that can be seen but cannot see. May you merit welcoming the Divine Presence that personifies 'can see but cannot be seen'."

Rabbeinu Hakadosh turned to Rabbi Chiya: "And you wished to prevent me from receiving this blessing?!"

The blessing of that blind Sage was significant, even though generally a Sage can bless just by gazing with his eyes that have become sanctified through the words of Torah that they see the entire day.

Concerning Ya'akov Avinu it says, "Now Israel's eyes were heavy with age". Since this was the case, how could he bless Menashe and Ephraim? Therefore, for the blessing to fall, he hugged and kissed them.

Concerning Yitzchak Avinu, we are also told, "And it came to pass, when Yitzchak had become old, and his eyes dimmed from seeing". This is why he asked Ya'akov Avinu, "Come close, if you please, and kiss me" so that the blessing will befall the one being blessed.



Pearls of the Parsha

A Directive for Generations: Return to the Land of Our Fathers

"Please do not bury me in Egypt" (Bereishit 47:29)

When Ya'akov Avinu a"h perceived his children and grandchildren settling in Egypt, he was afraid that they might come to consider this land as their native land, over time forgetting their birthplace and exchanging the Jordan river with Egypt's Nile.

This concern, explains Rabbi Shamshon Rafael Hirsch zt"l, aroused Ya'akov as the Patriarch of the family, to strengthen the hope in the heart of his descendants to return to the Land of their fathers. He said to them, "My children, do you really wish to live in Egypt? I do not even wish to be buried there!"

A Symbol of Brotherly Love

"By you shall Yisrael bless saying, 'May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Menashe'" (Bereishit 48:20)

The two brothers, Ephraim and Menashe, personified a special attribute. Ever since the creation of the world, dissension between brothers has always been a frequent occurrence. They were always a symbol of jealousy and competition.

This is how it was with Kayin and Hevel, Yitzchak and Yishmael, Ya'akov and Esav, and even Yosef with his brothers.

However, the relationship between Ephraim and Menashe was the exception, as the sefer 'Mikdash Mordechai' points out. Even though Ya'akov put Ephraim, the younger brother, first and Menashe could have justifiably hated him for this, the act did not arouse any jealousy and the two brothers lived in total fraternity.

In line with this attribute that Ephraim and Menashe personified, Ya'akov blessed them that others will be blessed through them. "May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Menashe" who excelled in the attribute of fraternity. They should be a symbol to all who wish to bless their children with love and harmony.

Intention, in Mitzvah Performance Only

"For in their rage they murdered people and with their will, they maimed an ox" (Bereishit 49:6)

The Holy Rashi explains the moral of this verse. "'For in their rage they murdered people', this refers to Chamor and the people of Shechem. 'And with their will, they maimed an ox', this refers to the fact that they wished to disable Yosef who is figuratively likened to an ox."

Rabbi Avraham Palagi, quoting one of the Gaonim of Tzefat, Rabbi Yosef Shaul, offers an interesting explanation on these words. When a person transgresses a sin it is better for him to perform it unintentionally, without intending to transgress. But when a person performs a mitzvah it is better to do so intentionally.

But some people lack mazal and mix things up. They sin with specific intent and perform mitzvot unintentionally.

Killing the people of Shechem because of the sin they transgressed, was considered a mitzvah. But how was it carried out? "For in their rage", with much anger and not with the intention of performing a mitzvah. On the other hand, when they sold Yosef, an act that was considered a sin, they did it with intent, as it says "and with their will, they maimed an ox".

This, then, was the claim against them. Why did they behave like this, "for in their rage they murdered people with their will, they maimed an ox"? If they had no choice but to carry out these acts, they could have at least mixed things up, "for in their rage they maimed an ox and with their will, they murdered people". They should have sold Yosef with anger and with intent killed the people of Shechem.

Treasures

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



The Singularity of Menashe and Ephraim

"So he blessed them on that day, saying" (Bereishit 48:20)

The holy Alshich zya" questions why the verse stresses that he blessed them "on that day". Seemingly it would suffice to say "So he blessed them, saying". He also questions the implication of the extra 'vav' in the word 'לאמר', saying, which is usually spelt 'לאמר'.

I would like to suggest the following answer. Rashi writes on this verse that one who wishes to bless his children will bless them with this blessing. Each father will bless his son saying, 'May G-d make you like Ephraim and like Menashe'. This means that the holy tribes too were commanded to bless their children "May G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe". This could have aroused a measure of grievance in their hearts, causing them to think, 'Why are these offspring superior to the offspring of the other brothers? Why should all be blessed to be like Yosef's sons? Are we and our children inferior to them?'

On that day that Yosef brought his sons to be blessed by his father before his passing, certainly the other tribes also brought their children with them to receive a blessing from Ya'akov. And suddenly Ya'akov put his other grandchildren to the side and praised the prominence and greatness of Ephraim and Menashe. In addition, he instructed them all to bless their children to be like them. This could have, G-d forbid, aroused feelings of jealousy in their hearts, for why are Yosef's sons more important than the sons of the other tribes?

But Ya'akov Avinu a"h wished to impart to them an ethical message and way of life. They should understand that they are obligated to listen to and obey Da'at Torah, and if this is what the holy grandfather has established, they have no permission to reflect on his deeds. Since his opinion is Da'at Torah, they must accept it willingly even if they do not completely understand the matter. They are obligated to recognize and understand clearly that their grandfather Ya'akov perceives far into the distance what they cannot see. Therefore, they must accept his opinion without questioning and without differing. The tribes withstood the test and accepted the holy opinion of their father with joy and love. And indeed they all blessed their children with the blessing "May G-d make you like Ephraim and Menashe".

So that this instruction should be preserved for all generations and no individual will be able to contend with the fact that particularly the sons of Yosef were chosen for the 'Blessing of the Children', it therefore says "on that day", implying that this is something they should forever remember. Due to this, Ya'akov went to the trouble of maneuvering his hands before blessing Ephraim and Menashe (he crossed his hands and put his right hand on Ephraim who was standing on his left and his left hand on Menashe who was standing on his right), rather than changing their positions which would make it easier for him to bless them. Even though he was very sick and elderly and maneuvering his hands involved great effort, he nevertheless went to the trouble so that all should remember this day and the act will be imprinted in their memory forever, so that throughout the generations no-one will contend with the blessing that Ephraim and Menashe received.

The verse says "on that day" to stress that we are talking about a special, distinctive day where all witnessed the uniqueness and worthiness of Ephraim and Menashe. This was the day on which Ya'akov invested special effort to perform a unique act of crossing over his hands to bless them. In this way, the great importance of Ephraim and Menashe was made clear for all generations.

A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



Ya'akov Avinu crossed back over the river to fetch some small earthenware pitchers that he had forgotten. The Gemara tells us that Ya'akov went back

because "to the righteous, their money is dearer to them than their bodies", because they scrupulously avoid even a suggestion of dishonesty. In this week's Parsha Rashi points out on the words "my grave which I have hewn for myself" (Bereishit 50:5), "Ya'akov took all the silver and gold that he brought from Lavan's house and made it into a heap and said to Esav, 'Take this in exchange for your share in the Cave of Machpelah'". Rashi in Parshat Vayigash (Bereishit 46:6) writes, "But what he had amassed in Padan Aram, he gave it all to Esav for his share in the Cave of Machpelah. He said, 'My acquisitions acquired outside Eretz Yisrael are not worthwhile for me'. This is the meaning of 'my grave which I have hewn for myself'. He stacked for him piles of gold and silver like a heap and told Esav, 'Take these'."

Rabbi Moshe Weiss, in his sefer 'Mei Zahav', brings a wonderful explanation. Ya'akov Avinu did not want to benefit from money acquired in Chutz La'aretz because the Gemara says (Ketubot 110b) that anyone who lives in Chutz La'aretz is compared to one who does not have a G-d. As the Ramban in Parshat Acharei Mot explains, outside of Eretz Yisrael there is a different form of Divine Providence than that of Eretz Yisrael. It is written concerning Eretz Yisrael, "The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to year's end" (Devarim 11:12). Other places in the world are subject to the intervention of angels who are appointed over that country.

It follows that outside of Eretz Yisrael, all the material abundance that comes to the world comes through the appointed angel or the Zodiac signs and not directly through Hashem. Whereas in Eretz Yisrael,

the abundance emanates directly from Hashem.

Since this is the case, explains Rabbi Yosef Salant zt"l, in his sefer 'Be'er Yosef', Ya'akov Avinu said, I do not want to use money that comes to me from the appointed angel or through the Zodiac signs and not directly from Hashem. Ya'akov Avinu gave away all his wealth in exchange for a gravesite in the Cave of Machpelah, saying that in Chutz La'aretz I acquired wealth but lost out on two mitzvot, and all this wealth is not worth losing two mitzvot!

Which two mitzvot did he lose out on? Chazal ask on the verse "Ya'akov became very frightened and it distressed him" (Bereishit 32:8), what was Ya'akov afraid of? Hashem had told him that He will watch over him! Chazal answer that Ya'akov was afraid because of two mitzvot that he did not fulfil, the mitzvot of living in Eretz Yisrael and honoring one's parents.

To counteract this, Ya'akov publicly declared that he was prepared to give away all the money that he earned in Chutz La'aretz in exchange for the merit of these two mitzvot!

How will he merit these two mitzvot?

The Be'er Yosef explains that he handed over all his money to Esav in exchange for a portion in Eretz Yisrael, which also gave him the merit of being buried next to his father. This is how he merited these two mitzvot, both honoring his parents and settling in Eretz Yisrael.

This shows how precious he considered Eretz Yisrael. And if Esav was prepared to sell, for a few pennies, his portion in Eretz Yisrael, it is a sign that he appreciated neither Eretz Yisrael nor his father.

Now we understand why Ya'akov Avinu was prepared to pay a fortune for his portion in Eretz Yisrael. On the one hand so as to atone for not living in Eretz Yisrael and also for not being able to honor his father during the time that he was away from home.

What is the Value of Laying Tefillin?

Harav Rosenblum shlita adds a beautiful story concerning a Jew who lived in Chutz La'aretz. After the shacharit prayers, he mistakenly left his Tefillin in the Beit Kneset and noticed only when he came

home that evening, at the end of a day's work. Since he was extremely tired, he decided not to go to the Beit Kneset to fetch them, despite being afraid that they may be stolen during the night.

The next morning when he awoke, he noticed that heavy snow had piled up on the roads and sidewalk during the night. He decided to pray at home, but how could he do so without his Tefillin? He called his Rav who told him that the Shulchan Aruch rules that a person is obligated to give away a fifth of his assets to fulfil a positive commandment.

He immediately called the municipality: "Why are you not clearing the street where I live?" he demanded.

"Are you crazy?" they replied, "Do you think we send forces to clear the entire New York? We only clear the main streets."

"And how much will I have to pay for the pleasure of having the road from my home to the Beit Kneset cleared, a distance of one and a half kilometers?"

"The pleasure will cost you ten thousand dollars."

He recalled the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch that his Rav had pointed out. \$10,000 was less than a fifth of his assets so he replied, "Okay. It's fine with me. I would like you to come."

After taking care of the payment with his credit card, a team of workers arrived and carried out the work which took a few hours.

When he arrived at the Beit Kneset, his Rav was there. When the Rav heard the lengths to which this man had gone for the sake of retrieving his Tefillin, he told him with emotion: "Shloimele! With this impressive deed that you performed, you attached a price to your mitzvah of Tefillin! You proved that laying Tefillin is as dear and precious to you as \$10,000. From now on you will receive a reward for laying Tefillin in line with how you defined the mitzvah. Besides, all the times you laid Tefillin until today, will retroactively also be regarded in line with this definition, for you proved your relationship to this mitzvah. Two people can lay Tefillin and each will receive a different reward. It depends on the extent to which each one attaches importance to the mitzvah.