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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

Am Yisrael at the Splitting of the Sea

"And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea and split it" (Shemot 14:16)

There is a well-known Chazal (Shemot Rabba 21:6) that when Moshe stretched out his arm over the sea to split it, the waters did not wish to comply and continued flowing, even though Hashem had made a condition with them at the time of the Six Days of Creation that the day will come when they will have to split for Bnei Yisrael upon leaving Egypt.

The Holy Ohr HaChaim questions this Chazal (Shemot 14:27). How can one explain the idea that the waters did not want to fulfil Hashem's command and split for Moshe? Moreover, it was a stipulation from the time of the creation of the world. And conversely, we find several incidents in the Gemara concerning Tannaim and Amoraim for whom the waters of a river or brook split, as with the example of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair (Chulin 7a). What is the root of the difference between the generation of Moshe Rabbeinu where the sea did not wish to split, and the generation in which Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair and the rest of the Tannaim and Amoraim lived, where the waters split for them?

The Holy Ohr HaChaim explains that the foundation of the matter lies in the fact that in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, Bnei Yisrael had not yet accepted the Torah, so the merit of Torah did not stand for them for the world to change its nature and boundaries by splitting apart its waters. On the other hand, the river split for Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair since he possessed the power of Torah and this afforded him the merit of the waters changing their nature and coming to a standstill instead of continuing to flow. (See the words of the Holy Ohr HaChaim where he writes about this at length).

Later on, concerning the splitting of the sea, the Torah writes, "Hashem said to Moshe, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the water will go back upon Egypt, upon its chariots and upon its horsemen'" (ibid 14:26). The Ohr HaChaim has a further difficulty with this. Why was it necessary to command Moshe to stretch out his arm once again over the sea so that it should return to its original nature and wash away the Egyptians? The entire goal of the splitting of the sea was that Bnei Yisrael should be able to cross in escape of the Egyptians. If the sea would remain parted into two, the Egyptians would cross on the dry land and the miracle would be pointless. This being the case, Hashem's command to Moshe to once again stretch out his arm over the sea, seems unnecessary. The sea returning to its original state after the crossing of Bnei Yisrael would seem to be an integral part of the miracle and not something that requires an additional command.

Chazal tell us that the sea heard the Minister of Egypt claiming, "These (the Jewish People) serve idolatry and these (the Egyptians) serve idolatry". Therefore, it thought, why do the Jewish people have superior-

ity over the Egyptians that the sea has to change its nature for them, while the Egyptians did not merit this miracle? This thought seems very strange. Can one really compare Am Yisrael to the Egyptians and say that they served idolatry to the same degree that the Egyptians did? Am Yisrael were in the process of emerging from the forty-ninth level of impurity and had already left idol worship behind. So why did the sea think that the Jewish people and the Egyptians were on the same level and served idolatry to the same extent?

This question can be answered according to the proclamation concerning the generation of the king Chizkiyahu. At that time, there was no young girl or boy who was not intricately familiar with all the details of the laws of impurity and purity because Chizkiyahu stuck a sword by the entrance to the Beit Midrash and proclaimed that anyone who does not sit and engage in Torah will be stabbed with this sword. This act of Chizkiyahu cannot be understood literally, because we trust that we are supposed to study Torah since it makes us wise and is a protection against the Yetzer Hara. On the other hand, there is no explicit command in the Torah that one who desists from Torah study will be punished with death. This shows us that Torah study is a merit for those who study it and affords reward to those who meditate in it, but one who evades Torah study but still observes all the mitzvot with meticulousness is not liable to the death penalty. If so, from where did Chizkiyahu draw upon the authority for his proclamation?

The severity of spiritual death over physical death is contingent on the fact that while a person may die, his soul continues to live in the World to Come. But if a person reaches spiritual destruction, he loses his life both in This World and in the World to Come. Therefore, this kind of death is infinitely more severe. Chizkiyahu was implying that one who does not study Torah is sending an open invitation to all worldly temptations, and thereby kills his soul. It follows then that the street (רחוב, street, has the same letters as חרב, sword) is his death.

According to this one can explain that at first, the sea did not wish to return to its original state and drown the Egyptians, because it thought that since Bnei Yisrael worship idols just as the Egyptians and have not yet received the Torah, there is nothing to protect them from the challenges of this world, for material temptations are compared to avodah zarah which brings great tragedy and destruction on Am Yisrael. This theory was strengthened after the sea saw the great wealth with which the Jewish people left Egypt because it assumed that this wealth was considered as temptation and materialism which are compared to idolatry. Only after Hashem told the sea that this wealth was part of the promise that was given to the Avot that Bnei Yisrael will leave Egypt with great wealth, was the sea appeased and returned to its former state.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Journey Back to His Roots

A non-religious Jew who lived in France was preparing for a trip to Pakistan with several friends. This is a country categorically unfriendly toward the Jews, to say the least. When I was informed of his plans, and being aware of the real dangers to his life that such a trip would entail, I asked him to come and see me.

"I heard you are planning a trip to Pakistan," I began. "Please cancel it. It is no place for a Jew."

The man was surprised at my words and asked, "How does the Rav know about my planned trip? And why does the Rav see fit to discourage me from going?"

"I somehow heard about your plans. I don't know why, but I felt it imperative to warn you not to go. B'ezrat Hashem, you will become enlightened and do complete teshuvah." The man ended up obeying me and cancelled his trip to Pakistan.

A few days later, he got word that all of his friends who had gone were killed in a fatal car accident. He tangibly saw how obeying a Torah authority saved him from certain death.

Baruch Hashem, his wondrous deliverance was the catalyst for him to recognize the Creator and do a complete teshuvah.

The Haftarah

"Devorah sang" (Shoftim 5)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the downfall of Sisera and his army, and about the shira of Devora the prophetess and Barak the son of Avinoam, where they praise Hashem for the miracle of saving them from their enemies. The Parsha talks about the downfall of the wicked Pharaoh and the drowning of his army in the depth of the Yam Suf, and about the shira of Moshe Rabbeinu and Bnei Yisrael that they sung by the sea.

Ashkenazim begin reading from **"Devorah was a prophetess"** (Shoftim 4).

Guard Your Tongue

Speaking Derogatively about a Product

Speaking derogatively about a product which will prevent others from buying it, is considered as lashon hara because it can harm the livelihood of the manufacturer or seller.

Similarly, it is forbidden to deride a certain lecturer because this will stop people from listening to his lectures or will reduce the effect of his influence on his listeners.

Just as with any other mitzvah, one must accustom one's young children not to speak lashon hara. Children often speak negatively about food that they are served, and this can harm the one who prepared it. One must accustom one's children not to say negative comments to this effect.



In Our Father's Path

Sickness - a Warning Light to Correct One's Middot

The Maggid HaGaon HaTzadik Rabbi Aryeh Shechter shlita relates:

When my wife was sick I received not less than sixty-four pieces of advice. Not that five or six people did not offer me the same advice, but I counted the tips and not the number of people...

One piece of advice seemed to speak to me more than the others. A certain doctor called Dr. Barein opened a convalescent home near Miami, where patients are hospitalized for three weeks and fed with a special vegetarian diet which he developed. With this, he professed to save people from the terrible illness. Relative to other pieces of advice, this solution seemed the most credible.

Two hours before our flight was supposed to leave, I called my Rav and said to him, "HaRav, I feel that I am flying for nothing. I am wasting \$15,000 on this treatment, not including the airfare! I feel that I am investing so much money on some unstable assurance and really, all this money is going down the drain. I want to stay here!"

The Rav replied: "Go, exile atones, you should go!"

And what an exile it was... Just the actual flight to Miami was so terribly difficult. Thirty hours we suffered in the plane, may Hashem have mercy on us.

In this doctor's convalescent home there is no bread or milk products, no eggs, and certainly no meat. There is an abundance of nuts, and juice is squeezed from watermelon and melon. Also, they grow a certain kind of wheat and wait for it to sprout. The sick person himself must roll the wheat to produce 'wheat milk', and then drink it, as if this is what will heal him...

The doctor explained his treatment method: "Look, the illness is just a light that switches on to signal a person's negative traits. An angry person becomes ill. A proud person becomes ill. These are only warning lights that signal to the person that something is not okay with his behavior.

How do we try and heal him? We completely remove him from whatever he is used to. He used to eat everything, and suddenly he has to consume strange food. And then his head begins to make calculations. He starts building himself anew, working on his anger and pride. Through our treatment he can catch a ride on making changes in his life and divest himself of his negative ways and any bad traits!"

I left his presence and burst out crying, thinking to myself, "I had to travel thousands of kilometers away from Eretz Yisrael so that Doctor Barain, a gentile, should tell me why Hashem sends sickness, and how to get rid of it?!"

Illnesses come so that we should change and improve our middot, this is the goal of sickness!

Hashem promised Bnei Yisrael that if they observe the mitzvot and do what is just in the eyes of Hashem, "then any of the diseases that I placed in Egypt, I will not bring upon you, for I am Hashem, your Healer" (Shemot 15:26).



Pearls of the Parsha

Why Did Yisrael Sing Shira?

"Then Moshe and the Children of Israel chose to sing this song" (Shemot 15:1)

One can ask why the angels were not given permission to sing shira while Bnei Yisrael were allowed to do so?

The Kli Chemda answers that Bnei Yisrael were not singing shira for the downfall of the Egyptians, rather for their own salvation. As it says, "The might and vengeance of G-d was salvation for me". But the angels were not enslaved in Egypt so it follows that their shira was concerning others, and one does not sing shira when others are suffering.

The Manna was Sixty Times as Sweet!

"The House of Israel called it manna. It was like coriander seed, it was white and it tasted like a cake fried in honey" (Shemot 16:31)

The Torah tells us that the taste of the Manna was like a cake fried in honey, a honey cake.

The question is asked, Chazal explain that the sweetness of honey is one-sixtieth of the sweetness of the Manna. Meaning, the Manna was sixty times sweeter than honey. But the wording of the verse seems to imply that it was comparable to a cake fried in honey, meaning like honey itself?

Rabbi Reuven Karelstein zt"l quotes in the name of the Vilna Gaon zt"l that on the contrary, this is what the verse is saying: "It tasted like" means that it lends taste. How much taste does it lend? One-sixtieth. Just one-sixtieth of the Manna tasted like a cake fried in honey because the Manna itself was sixty times sweeter. One part of the Manna can be mixed with up to sixty amounts of a different food and it will still taste like honey.

Yosef Participated in the Mitzvah of Bringing Up His Bones

"Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him" (Shemot 13:19)

To be precise, the word 'with him' seems superfluous?

The Gemara (Sotah 13a) brings that when Am Yisrael were occupied with gathering spoil from the Egyptians before they left Egypt, Moshe went and stood by the bank of the Nile and said, "Yosef, Yosef, the time of the promised redemption has arrived, and it is time to fulfil the oath that you made Yisrael swear. If you show yourself, good, if not, we are free from your oath. Immediately Yosef's coffin arose."

If so, Rabbi Yitzchak Bedarshi zt"l, a French Sage, asks in the sefer 'Harei Bashamayim', since Yosef made Bnei Yisrael swear that they will bring up his bones to Eretz Yisrael, why did Moshe think that he would be exempt from this oath if Yosef's coffin does not arise?

This can be clarified by the words of the Mishna (Baba Metzia) which talks about the Torah command of unloading an animal, "If you see the donkey of someone you hate crouching under its burden, would you refrain from helping him? You shall help repeatedly with him" (Shemot 23:5). Chazal explain that if the donkey's owner sits at a distance and tells someone else, "If you wish to unload it, unload", that person is exempt, because it says, "with him".

It follows that "with him" implies that the owner himself must assist together with the one offering his help.

This is what the verse implies: "Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him", meaning that Yosef helping Moshe by making his coffin arise from the Nile, similar to the law of "you shall help repeatedly with him", was what obligated Moshe to fulfill the oath and take Yosef's coffin to Eretz Yisrael. That is how Moshe could say to Yosef that if he does not make himself appear they would be exempt from the oath.

Treasures

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



One who Follows the Torah Path is Saved from the Yetzer Hara

"Pharaoh approached: The Children of Israel raised their eyes and behold! Egypt was journeying after them, and they were very frightened; the Children of Israel cried out to Hashem" (Shemot 14:10)

As the sefarim tell us, Pharaoh symbolizes the Yetzer Hara (The Rambam's mussar to his son). "Pharaoh approached", implies that when the Yetzer Hara approaches man, he must immediately cleave strongly to Torah and mitzvot and cry out to Hashem in prayer and remain on the true path of Torah. This is what causes Hashem to come to our aid.

This idea also alludes to Yosef HaTzadik concerning the incident with the wife of Potiphar where it is written (Bereishit 39:11), "When he entered the house to do his work". Rashi quotes the Chazal (Sotah 36b) that says that "to do his work" can be interpreted in two different ways. One opinion says that he entered the house to see to his physical needs, and the other opinion holds that he entered the house to sin with the wife of Potiphar because the Yetzer Hara tempted him and placed him deep inside the challenge until on his own initiative he entered the house to sin with her. This is the concept of "Pharaoh approached", meaning that Pharaoh refers to the Yetzer Hara who approaches man with such power and strength and causes him to stumble and sin.

The Gemara tells us that Yosef was saved from sinning because the image of his father appeared to him and also because Divine Inspiration told him that if he sins his name will not be included among the rest of the Tribes in the Ephod. This is hinted to in the continuation of the verse, "The Children of Yisrael lifted their eyes". Yisrael refers to Ya'akov, the father of Yosef, and it was Ya'akov's image that appeared to him to save him from the sin. The word 'Yisrael' also hints to what he was told by Divine Inspiration, that his name will not be mentioned among the Tribes.

What protected him was his attachment to Torah and mitzvot as in "they cried out to Hashem", the continuation of the verse. As we said earlier, one who cleaves to the truth of Torah merits Hashem's assistance. And Yosef HaTzadik was attached to Torah, as we are told that when the Tribes discovered Yosef's identity, he asked them to take wagons to Ya'akov and Chazal tell us that the wagons symbolized the section of Eglah Arufah which Yosef had studied with Ya'akov just before he was sold. He wished to give over the message to Ya'akov that although he was living in Egypt among the gentile sorcerers, he remained attached to the Torah. This is why he merited being saved from the seduction of the Yetzer Hara and sinning with the wife of Potiphar, symbolized by "Pharaoh approached".

Another explanation is that these verses hint to Am Yisrael. When Bnei Yisrael saw that Pharaoh, meaning the Yetzer Hara, was approaching them to frighten them and make them despair in their service of Hashem, they immediately raised their eyes to their Father in Heaven as it says, "The Children of Israel raised their eyes". They then strengthened themselves and overcame their fear, and began to pray to Hashem to save them from the hands of the wicked Pharaoh. This is a lesson for all generations and teaches us how to behave when confronted with the Yetzer Hara.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

If we would be asked, 'Who deserves the description of a Ben Olam HaBa?' presumably we would extract several precise definitions of those who are worthy to be adorned with this longed-for title. Indeed, this is a question that Chazal have asked and answered: "Who is a Ben Olam HaBa? One who adjoins the blessing of the redemption to the Shemone Esrei prayer".

What lies in this prayer arrangement that makes one deserving of Olam HaBa?

There is a verse in Tehillim (111:4) "He made a memorial for His wonders, gracious and compassionate is Hashem". What is the connection between the beginning and the end of the verse? The beginning is talking about Hashem making a memorial for the wonders of the Exodus twice a day, and the end of the verse talks about Hashem's attributes...

There was once a wealthy Jew who lived in Brisk, called R' Yisrael. But the wheel of fortune turned, his source of livelihood could no longer be relied upon and his financial situation deteriorated. Just before reaching complete bankruptcy, he decided that he was obligated to do something to save the situation. He decided to travel to Baron Rothschild in England, a journey which would take him three months, and ask him for a loan of three thousand rubles. This was the only thing that could save his dire plight.

He sold his furniture, gave half the money to his wife for housekeeping expenses and took the other half with him for travel expenses. Three months later he arrived in England where he was told that the Baron received the public in a certain hall on Tuesday afternoons.

He went over to the hall and saw hun-

dreds of people standing on line. Two clerks were sitting at a desk, distributing one pound to some of the poor and half a pound to others. He was hit by a feeling of tremendous devastation. He had travelled for three months, left his wife and children, all for the sake of receiving at most one pound sterling?! He stood to the side and cried bitterly. He did not even feel how the tears were pouring down his face, but the clerks noticed. They saw the pitiful crying of this fine person and understood that it was not a simple situation. They asked him to explain his plight and he told them that he had come from afar to ask for a loan of three thousand rubles, but can see that they are only dispensing single pounds...

The clerks said to him: We are only the messengers, not the owners. But on Friday afternoon, the Baron comes here to organize his charity affairs. He looks over all the records and takes note of what needs to be done. If you come back on Friday, we can try to arrange a meeting for you and maybe you will merit deliverance...

At the end of the week R' Yisrael turned up at the Baron's office, and as soon as they met, before R' Yisrael managed to open his mouth, the Baron asked him: "Do you have somewhere to spend Shabbat?" R' Yisrael indeed had no idea where he would stay over Shabbat so the Baron graciously offered, "Please be my guest".

R' Yisrael rejoiced... the beginning of his relief was in sight! R' Yisrael, being a Talmid Chacham, spoke words of Torah in his pleasant voice until late at night, and caused much pleasure to Baron Rothschild during the rest of the Shabbat meals too...

After Havdalah, the Baron turned to him and asked, "R' Yisrael, what brought you here?"

"I will tell you the truth," he replied, "I was also once a very wealthy man, but things went from bad to worse until I now have to struggle to put bread on the table... I am in need of an urgent loan of three thousand rubles to put me

back on my feet.

The Baron asked him, "When things were at their best, how much were your assets worth?" R' Yisrael answered, "10,000 rubles". The Baron went over to his safe, took out 10,000 rubles that had just been released from the printing press, and handed them to him. He then took a piece of paper, wrote his name and address on it and placed it on top of the rubles.

The Baron then said, "I know you. If it ever happens again that you lose your assets, don't bother coming all the way here. Just send me a letter and help will be on its way..."

The lesson of the story is that Hashem said to Am Yisrael, "You were in bondage and I punished the Egyptians with Ten Plagues. I delivered you from Egypt and split the sea for you. Write down the address! If you come across further troubles, just remember the Exodus! Remember that I am merciful and compassionate, and then you will not forget to turn to Me!"

Remembering the wondrous Divine intervention at the time of the Exodus activates our awareness of Hashem's attributes which we can call on at any time. This is the connection between the beginning and end of the verse in Tehillim that we quoted above.

Most people remember to pray from the depths of their heart only when they are lacking something, when suddenly things are not working out, when the test results do not look so good... And when things are not in order, our prayer looks different. Suddenly we remember that there is Someone Who can help. But when everything is fine, unfortunately our prayers are not quite the same...

This is man's nature, when he feels he is missing something, he immediately remembers to turn and ask. But a wise person asks before the trouble arrives, before feeling a lack. This is the meaning of the Chazal that a person should always precede trouble with prayer, for during a time of trouble, G-d forbid, he is told, bring a merit and you will be saved.