

Shemini

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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"á



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

"I Will Be Sanctified Through Those Who Are Nearest to Me" One Can Also Live Al Kiddush Hashem

"Moshe said to Aharon: Of this did Hashem speak, saying: "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me, thus I will be honored before the entire people"; and Aharon was silent" (Vayikra 10:3)

Nadav and Avihu died after bringing an alien fire before Hashem, as the verse tells us, "The sons of Aharon, Nadav and Avihu, each took a fire pan, they put fire in them and placed incense upon it; and they brought before Hashem an alien fire that He had not commanded them" (Vayikra 10:1). The question is, why does Hashem say about their death, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me", which implies that they were close to Hashem, if they died after sinning by bringing an alien fire before Him?

The Holy Ohr HaChaim explains that Nadav and Avihu's sin was that the fire they brought was not a fire that Hashem had commanded them to bring. This implies that aside from this sin, they did not sin in any other way. We will clarify his holy words: When a person sins, besides the actual act that he performs counter to Hashem's will, he also sins with his thoughts for Hashem commanded him to perform a certain mitzvah and due to his laziness or lust, he sins and does not fulfill the mitzvah. It follows that his thoughts too, and not just the act, were contrary to the will of Hashem.

But, although Nadav and Avihu sinned with an act of offering a fire they had not been commanded about, their thoughts were entirely for Heaven's sake because on the contrary, they wished to draw even closer to Hashem and understood that bringing an alien fire would lead to their deaths. Nevertheless, they were even prepared to die as long as they could offer a korban to Hashem and draw even closer to Him.

This is why Hashem calls Nadav and Avihu His 'nearest' ones. For even though they died on account of their sin, nevertheless this sin contained an element of Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of G-d's Name) because their entire will was to come closer and cleave to their Creator even more, to the extent that they sacrificed their lives for this goal.

The mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem applies to every Jewish person but does not just include the obligation to die for the sanctification of His Name like Nadav and Avihu, one must also live 'al Kiddush Hashem'. When a person overcomes his temptations and withstands difficult, considerable challenges that Hashem sets in his path, this demonstrates his great love for and closeness to the Creator. And then about him, too, Hashem declares, "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me". For the more a person surrenders his personal wishes and temptations in the face of Hashem's will, the more it demonstrates his closeness to Hashem and in this way, he indeed becomes His nearest one.

I once met someone who was overcome by a moment of holy fervor. He stated that he wishes to sanctify G-d's Name but does not know how to go about this. I told him that Kiddush Hashem does not need to be a public act amid great exposure, rather even if when he is alone in his bedroom he overcomes his desires and acts in accordance with Hashem's wish alone, he has sanctified G-d's Name and become much closer to Him.

But this person asked me to help him consider what action

he could take. I therefore asked him if he has a non-kosher phone in his pocket. He replied in the positive so I told him that if he takes out his phone and smashes it to pieces even though it is an expensive device, and instead purchases a kosher phone, this would be an act of total surrender of his desires before Hashem and he will receive the reward reserved for those who sanctify His Name. Since all his friends will ask him what happened to his phone and why he changed his number, it will cause a great Kiddush Hashem.

It was hard for him to go along with my request and he began to explain how essential the phone was for his livelihood. However, he said that he is prepared to use it for work purposes only, which does not involve any prohibitions.

I told him Rashi's explanation on the verse (Divrei Hayamim II, 33:15), "He removed the strange gods and the image from the Temple of Hashem and all the altars that he had built on the Mountain of the Temple of Hashem and in Yerushalayim, discarding them outside the city". Menashe sinned, and also caused the public to sin, by serving avodah zara, but later repented. However, instead of smashing the idols to smithereens, he threw them behind the wall of Yerushalayim. It could be that he did not break them because they were expensive and he felt bad about the financial loss. But Rashi explains that the fact that he did not smash them is why his son and successor returned to his father's evil ways, brought back all those strange gods and worshipped them. Had Menashe smashed the idols, his son might not have purchased new ones to worship, but since they were available behind the wall, he returned to his father's avodah zara.

Kiddush Hashem means completely renouncing one's personal desires and despite the difficulty and financial loss involved, bowing only to Hashem's wish. Just like someone might spend a large sum on purchasing a beautiful Etrog or to buy the honors in the Beit Knesset, so too must he eradicate the evil that dwells in his pocket and home, even if they were very expensive devices and it will involve a great loss, for in this way he demonstrates his great love for Hashem and no amount of money can withstand this love.

An Avreich who sits and studies Torah the entire day also publicly sanctifies Hashem's Name, for every person wishes to provide for his family in a respectable manner. He dreams of purchasing different objects that make life easier, for example, a nice car, a beautiful home, and many other pleasures with which this World is inundated. However, he forgoes his desires for Hashem's sake and makes do with little just so that he can do His will and sit in Yeshiva or Kollel and study Torah day and night. There is no greater Kiddush Hashem than this! Even if all this is done privately, Hashem sees his deeds and considers him as His near one.

Similarly, a wife who demonstrates self-sacrifice by encouraging her husband to continue devoting himself to Torah study and the service of Hashem, receives a great reward in Heaven and she too will be considered as His near one.

Every person who arrives in the World of Truth desires only to come as close as he can to Hashem and enjoy the Glory of His Presence. But Hashem only draws close those who annulled their will and performed His will, for it is he alone who is considered as truly close to Him.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Contribution to the Creator

Many Jews from around the world came to celebrate the wedding of my son, Rabbi Moshe Aharon, shlita, which took place in Eretz Yisrael. Among the attendees was the eminent philanthropist, Mr. Matzliach. He generously supports our holy institutions and donated a beautiful Sefer Torah to our Beit Hakeneset in Ashdod, written by the former Rav of the community, Rabbi Yosef Yakobi, zt"l.

The day after the wedding, Mr. Matzliach asked to meet with Rabbi Yakobi who had written the Sefer Torah he had donated. To my regret, I informed him that Rabbi Yakobi had suddenly passed away.

The man was in shock. "Rabbi Yakobi was young and looked healthy. How could it be that he died so suddenly?"

I replied, "Listen to the words you just uttered. About this it says, 'and the living should take it to heart'. You are a businessman whose head is constantly involved in material matters and you could be in danger of forgetting Hashem, chas v'shalom, by regarding This World as the primary place of life.

"Hashem therefore sent you this message as a wake-up call. The sudden, tragic passing of this great man should teach you that this world is transient. Nobody lives forever."

My words entered his heart and he asked what he could do to keep this powerful message alive within him. I replied that he should undertake some commitment that would advance him spiritually.

"I will donate a sizeable sum to charity," he offered.

I was happy with his generosity but told him that he gives tzedakah in any event and thank G-d he is a man of means who is generous with his money.

Now was the time to undertake an additional mitzvah through which he would merit further closeness with his Creator.

The Haftarah

"David again gathered" (Shmuel II, 6)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells about the death of Uzzah who was punished for reaching out and grasping the holy Aron, whereas the Parsha speaks about the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Ahron Hakohen, who died when approaching before Hashem.

Guard Your Tongue

Lashon Hara in Subtext

One of the forms of 'avak lashon hara' can be caused precisely due to caution in guarding one's tongue. If a person says that he doesn't want to say lashon hara about someone, these words can imply that he is aware of something derogatory about him.

To say "I would prefer not to speak about so and so" is forbidden because of 'avak lashon hara'.

When a person is faced with this kind of situation, he must try to direct the conversation to a different topic or hint that he does not have any information about the person in question.



In Our Father's Path

So What if I am Sensitive to Certain Medications?

The entire creation, so Chazal tell us, was created as a corresponding system to the Holy Torah and the fulfillment of its mitzvot. "He looked in the Torah and created the world" (Zohar HaKadosh, Terumah). Therefore, the way we conduct ourselves in This World is supposed to be derived from the Torah. It is the Torah that guides and navigates us how to consider each part of the creation in the correct, purposeful and true way. This is why only the Sages and Gedolei Yisrael, who are well-versed in the Torah, possess the power through their crystal clear vision, to decide that right is right and left is left.

Only they, who draw their entire outlook in life from the Torah, are capable of discerning the difference between 'kalah ilan' (the color blue derived from a vegetable source) and the very similar color, light blue; between something permissible and something to stay away from. For through the wisdom of the Torah, they enjoy a vibrantly clear vision of the entire gamut of the creation. It is the window through which they merit a penetrating, deep, untainted and pure understanding of everything in their line of vision.

HaGaon Rabbi Yisrael Zicherman shlita, relates that he heard the following from one of the doctors who attended the tzadik, Rabbi Dov Yaffe zt"l, Mashgiach of Yeshivas 'Kfar Chassidim' when he was hospitalized towards the end of his life. One day the doctor wished to give Rabbi Yaffe a certain medication and first asked him, as he was accustomed to doing, if he is sensitive to any kind of medication and which medications he is taking at present.

The Mashgiach turned to the doctor with a smile, "What difference does it make? If you want to give me a certain medication, what difference does it make if I am sensitive to a different medication, or what else I am taking besides this medication?"

The doctor answered the Mashgiach at length: "Look, before prescribing any medication for a pa-

tient, one is required to take the patient's entire condition into account. Sometimes combining a medication from a certain group can impair the effect of a different medication. Sometimes one medication might be beneficial for the heart but in certain situations, might damage the kidneys, or on the other hand, a medication that aids liver function might sometimes cause damage to the intestines. Every medication has its own calculations and factors that must be taken into account and therefore on no account may one give a patient a certain medication without clarifying his entire situation."

When the doctor left his room, the Mashgiach turned to his visitors and said, "Did you hear how medication is prescribed? When giving medication to a patient, it is important to get the full picture. This is a great lesson for our Avodat Hashem!"

"For example", the Mashgiach continued, "concerning rebuke. Even when the Torah deems it is necessary to rebuke someone, there are those who rebuke harshly, in an outburst of anger, without meticulously taking into account the range of problems that the rebuke may cause the offender, or without being aware of his general spiritual situation, of the gain versus the loss."

"The doctor taught us today that first of all, before offering rebuke, one must assess and examine thoroughly, what are his sensitivities? What is his general situation? It is not certain at all that one may admonish him. Sometimes, not only will it not help, but it will even cause damage, and for this one needs the discretion and knowledge of a professional doctor".

Rav Zicherman shlita concluded, "This idea can also be applied to the concept of 'emunat chachamim':

Woe to the naive patient, who lacks a basic understanding of the nature of various illnesses and their healing, if he relies on his own understanding and contrary to the doctor's opinion, pulls out some kind of medication from his supplies that he deems suitable to bring him relief. His decision might exacerbate his condition and even bring about his death, G-d forbid.

Every thinking person knows that only a doctor who specialized in medicine for many years, studied the essence of each illness in depth, is familiar with the nature of medications and their ramifications, besides having a comprehensive view of the patient's entire situation, is competent to decide which specific medication will be beneficial for which illness and the exact dose each patient requires.

This must be our approach towards the Torah sages and Elders of the generation".



Pearls of the Parsha

The Death of Tzadikim Hints to Future Happenings

"And He will become wrathful with the entire assembly" (Vayikra 10:6)

The Hebrew word 'יקצוף', He will become wrathful, is written in the future tense but since Nadav and Avihu had already died, it would seem more fitting to have said "And He became wrathful with the entire assembly", in the past tense.

The sefer 'Eidut Biheyosef' (256) offers a wonderful explanation, quoting the famous words of Rabbi Heschel of Cracow who explains that there are two reasons why tzadikim die. One reason is so they should not see the troubles of the generation and a second reason is to atone for the generation. The difference between the two is that according to the first reason, all the tzadikim would need to die, while according to the second reason, to achieve atonement it is enough that just one tzadik dies.

This explains wonderfully that as in this case both Nadav and Avihu died and not just one tzadik, it seemingly proves the reason that tzadikim die is so that they should not witness the suffering of the generation. Am Yisrael derived from this that some imminent tribulation would befall them, and that is why the verse uses the future expression "He will become wrathful with the entire assembly".

Creatures That May Not Be Eaten, As a Stringency

"To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure, and between edible creatures and creatures that may not be eaten" (Vayikra 11:47)

A precise look at the wording of the verse gives rise to the following question: Should it not have said "between edible creatures and inedible creatures"? Why in fact does the verse end with the words "that may not be eaten" that seems to imply that the person is prevented from eating it?

Rabbi Chaim Ya'akov Gottlieb zt"l answers this question in his sefer 'Yagel Ya'akov', according to the disagreement among the Rishonim concerning a fish called 'brobota'. According to several Rishonim, even though this fish loses its scales when it leaves the water, nevertheless since it has scales when in the water, it is considered as a pure creature.

However, Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid says that even though it is a permitted fish, one who consumes it will not merit eating from the livyasan. He writes that Rabbeinu Ephraim at first permitted this fish but after he was told in a dream that he was permitting vermin, he withdrew his ruling and forbade it, declaring that anyone who desists from eating this fish will merit being showered with blessings.

It follows that even those who forbade eating the fish only forbade it as a stringency (chumra).

This Gemara can be used to clarify the intention of the above verse. "The edible creatures", refers to those creatures that are permitted according to the Torah, while "and creatures that may not be eaten", refers to creatures that are forbidden according to the Torah. Saying "may not be eaten" in place of "inedible" hints to the fact that there is a type of fish, like the 'brobota', that is permitted according to the Torah, however it is considered as "may not be eaten" by man, in line with the stringency of Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid and Rabbeinu Ephraim. This is why the verse ends by saying "and the creature that may not be eaten".

A Wonderful Segulah to be Blessed with Boys

"To distinguish between the contaminated and the pure" (Vayikra 11:47)

This is the closing verse of Parshat Shemini, adjacent to the following Parsha of Tazria where it says "When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male".

Why is this verse adjacent to Parshat Tazria?

The Gemara (Shevuot 18b) reveals the reason why they are put next to each other and the auspicious significance that we can derive from it. This is what the Gemara says:

"Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says, Rabbi Yochanan said: Anyone who makes Havdalah over wine on Motzei Shabbat will merit male children, as it says "to distinguish (להבדיל) between the contaminated and the pure" which is followed by "when a woman conceives and gives birth to a male".

Here we have an assured segulah from our Holy Chazal, that one who requires salvation to be blessed with male children, should make Havdalah over a cup of wine on Motzei Shabbat and through that, with Hashem's help, he will merit the salvation he awaits.

Treasures

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



The Rectification Will Come from Crying and Repentance

"The entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited" (Vayikra 10:6)

Nadav and Avihu knew that on the day of the dedication of the Mishkan there would be enormous joy in Heaven and on earth. Joy in Heaven that Hashem actualized His desire to dwell with His children down below as it says (Shemot 25:8), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them", and joy on earth since the descent of the Shechina was a sign for Am Yisrael that Hashem had forgiven them for the sin of the Golden Calf. Nadav and Avihu were concerned that maybe due to this joy, Bnei Yisrael would not rectify the impression caused by the sin of the Golden Calf that blemished both worlds, but will be satisfied with the feeling of joy that Hashem is descending to rest His Shechina among them.

They were apprehensive that if Bnei Yisrael would only be occupied with their joy and not vacate their attention to completely rectify the sin of the Golden Calf which caused the Shechina to depart, the same thing might happen once again if they do not utilize this day of the dedication of the Mishkan for rectification.

Nadav and Avihu fulfilled the verse, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting". They thought that it will be a good thing if they die on the day the Shechina descends so that Bnei Yisrael will cry over their death and through that, they will be aroused to repent and purify themselves completely from any trace of this or any other sin. As a result, Hashem will continue to rest His Presence among them.

Nadav and Avihu understood that through only the actual joy at the Shechina's descent, Bnei Yisrael will not achieve complete rectification; it will come about specifically through crying over their death, just as it is preferable to go to a house of mourning, for this will arouse them to search their souls and contemplate why Hashem had to remove His Presence from them, and ponder their role and purpose in This World.

Hashem agreed with Nadav and Avihu and therefore said (Vayikra 10:6), "The entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited" since Nadav and Avihu sacrificed their souls for Am Yisrael's sake and their death would be the catalyst for Am Yisrael's full repentance. In this merit, the Shechina will not hurry to depart.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Why Did the Ice Cream Melt?

Concerning Kosher Nutrition and How it Benefits Us from a Torah Perspective

Kosher nutrition, the Holy Torah reveals to us, is the very key and magical formula for a person's success in his religious way of life. Food that is held up to a meticulous standard of kashrut, bolsters and fortifies, improves and advances. Food that is heaven forbid not kosher, food that is not fit to be eaten, spreads poison in a person's soul, contaminates his capacity to comprehend, stops up his mind and prevents it from developing.

This magical formula is guaranteed, as it were, with the signature of the most expert scientist on the planet, Who is aware of all the food products in the world and Who created all the different kinds of nutrition. Only the Creator of the World who conceived all of these and understands all of their ingredients, is aware of the results of research that will take the scientific world another few hundred years, at least, to discover. He has merited us with a Heavenly formula for advantageous nutrition that leads to improving the quality of our lives and attaining the peak of our aspirations in all spheres of life.

All those who are familiar with Jewish history are aware that it is saturated with thousands of stories of bravery of Jews sacrificing their lives for the sake of adhering to kashrut, even to the extent of self-starvation for lengthy periods of times, often under substandard conditions. This week's Novel Look at the Parsha is dedicated to the remarkable personality of HaGaon HaRav Avraham Ganchovsky zt"l about whom it is related ('Vayomer Hineni') that he ate meat and chicken only after being absolutely certain about all the halachic aspects. However, there were many years when for some reason, he was stringent and ate only vegetables, milk products, eggs and bread.

After washing his hands and reciting

the blessing over bread, he first ate the bread with great meticulousness and concentration (just as we are instructed to consume the first kezayit of bread within two minutes) and after that, it is hard to know whether this was due to his concentration on Torah thoughts that he had no idea what he was putting into his mouth, or because he had lost all taste in food, however it seemed to the onlooker that he was engaged in hidden and sublime service while eating. If for example, he would be given a tray with slices of bread, a lump of butter, salad, jam, cheese, milk, water and sugar, he ate in order of what appeared on the tray. He ate the cheese, then put the lump of butter into his mouth. After swallowing it he ate the vegetable salad and then the jam, just like that, one food after another, sweet or spicy, with patience, pleasantness, and simplicity. For what difference does it make how the vitamins enter the body...

He ate without acts of abstention and external acts of devotion. Even during the Shabbat meals, he did not eat like one who enjoys his food but only in honor of the Shabbat, without paying any attention to the particulars of the food. (Nevertheless, he would praise the Rabbanit again and again, "The food is so good, gives me strength", "absolutely wonderful", and other expressions from the depth of his heart.)

In addition, a close talmid testifies: I was his chavruta for about four years and often at lunchtime they brought him hot food but he never ate the food while it was hot. It appeared as if this was not deliberate, but simply because he was always in the middle of a Maharsha or Rashba and did not want to interrupt his learning, so automatically the food grew cold. But it could very well be that this involved some halachic stringency or a form of breaking his temptation for food etc., and it was always his way to hide his holy conduct.

One of his talmidim related: I once noticed that at the side of the table there was some food left over from yesterday's lunch. I tidied the table and of course, threw yesterday's leftovers in the garbage. When the Rav entered the dining room he asked, "Where is the portion of food that was here?" I was surprised that the Rav was showing an interest in food and inquired, "Why does the Rav need it?"

"Today is Rosh Chodesh and I saved this food from yesterday for a Rosh Chodesh meal!" I apologized and helped him get hold of different food in honor of Rosh Chodesh...

Since he was accustomed to eating an additional dish in honor of Rosh Chodesh, he would go to the store to buy something. He took whatever he noticed on the shelf or whatever the store owner suggested. In his later years, he drank wine in honor of Rosh Chodesh. The story is told that once he was in a rush and the store owner suggested that he buy ice cream. He took it, paid, placed it on the table in his room and then went up to the Beit Midrash to learn and forgot about the world around him. Just before sunset, he remembered that he had not yet eaten the special dish in honor of Rosh Chodesh, so he quickly went down to his room and of course found the ice cream melted on his table...

Another time he specifically delayed eating the ice cream so that it should melt... It was when a spirited Avreich suggested that he eat ice cream in honor of Rosh Chodesh. In his modesty, he did not make a big deal out of this request and agreed with his characteristic naturalness. The Avreich brought him a portion of ice cream on a plate and then Rabbi Avraham began a fascinating Halachic discussion about the blessing one recites over ice cream; what ice cream is made from and how the ingredients have an effect on the correct blessing. The Avreich delved into the subject together with him and eventually when they concluded their discussion, the ice cream had melted and that is how he ate it from the plate, praising the Avreich warmly for the special ice cream...

Incidentally, his acquaintances and family members never heard him using the word 'tasty'. He would only use words such as 'good', 'special', 'healthy', 'fortifying', 'excellent' and other similar expressions. His holy conduct was amazingly attuned to his Torah way of life where he was particular not only about the kashrut of the foods and different stringencies but also conducted himself with behaviors through which he suppressed his temptations and pure enjoyment of food, which he dedicated instead to his service of Hashem with exceptional integrity and wisdom.