

Acharei Mot Kedoshim

April 17th 2021
5th of Iyar 5781

899



Paris • Orh 'Haïm Ve Moché

32, rue du Plateau • 75019 Paris • France
Tel: 01 42 08 25 40 • Fax: 01 42 06 00 33
hevratpinto@aol.com

Jérusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israël
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570
p@hpinto.org.il

Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashdod • Israël
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527
orothaim@gmail.com

Ra'anana • Kol 'Haïm

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israël
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



Hilula

12 - Rabbi Susu Yosef HaKohen, Rav of Guavas

13 - Rabbi Ya'akov Abulapia, Av Beit Din of Teveria

14 - Rabbi Tzedaka Harari HaKohen

15 - Rabbi David Yehudayof

16 - Rabbi Rafael Eliyahu Abu, founder of 'Otzar HaTorah', Morocco

17 - Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Moreh, Rav of Taharan

18 - Rabbi Shalom Buzgalo, author of 'Mikdash Melech'

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

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

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

MASKIL LEDAVID

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

The Reason for Naming the Parsha in Memory of Aharon's Sons

"Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they approached before Hashem and they died" (Vayikra 16:1)

Let us consider why this Parsha is called 'Acharei Mot', 'after the death' (of Aharon's two sons), since their death is only mentioned in the first verse of the Parsha, while the rest of the Parsha speaks about matters concerning the Mikdash. It would seem more appropriate to call this Parsha 'Mishkan' or something similar, why does the name refer to a subject that is actually described in greater detail in Parshat Shemini?

To answer this question, we will start by explaining that Chazal bring different opinions as to why the sons of Aharon were punished. One opinion holds that they were punished for serving in the Mikdash without being married. Another opinion says that they entered the Mikdash intoxicated, while others say that it was because they offered an alien fire. Some Sages maintain that they were punished for offering a halachic ruling in their master's presence. There is even an opinion that says it was a punishment for their insolence in declaring about Moshe and Aharon, "When will these two old people die and we will lead the people in their place?"

Apparently, each of the above acts on its own was not enough of a reason to punish Aharon's sons with death, but all of them added up together was considered as going too far and that is why Hashem deemed them liable.

Aharon's sons offered incense before Hashem even though they were not asked to do so to make a powerful point. They were afraid that Bnei Yisrael would grow accustomed to Hashem's presence resting among them and in the Mikdash, which would lead to a lack of respect for the Mishkan and the Shechina, resulting in punishment. For just as Bnei Yisrael grew accustomed to Moshe and Aharon's presence, to the extent that they were not afraid of being insolent and coming to them with complaints and requests, Aharon's sons were afraid that the same would happen with the Mishkan and Bnei Yisrael could grow accustomed to Hashem's Presence and G-d forbid, treat it lightly. Therefore, the sons of Aharon, with enormous self-sacrifice, wanted to do something that would cost them their lives, thereby publicly proving the extent to which one must be vigilant for the honor of the Mishkan and the Shechina, in strict accordance with the law.

From thought to deed, the sons of Aharon entered the Mikdash and offered an alien fire, as a result of which they were consumed. As soon as Bnei Yisrael became aware of what happened, they were filled with fear and awe and became more meticulous with the honor of the Mishkan.

Because the sons of Aharon performed this act with enormous self-sacrifice and concern for Am Yisrael, the verse tells us (Vayikra 10:6), "the entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited." Similarly, Hashem instructed that the name of the Parsha that speaks about the Mikdash should recall their deaths, so as to put them on a pedestal and stress that all the honor that Bnei Yisrael display for the Mishkan and later for the Mikdash is credited

to Aharon's sons who aroused them concerning this matter.

I saw that Chazal say, "The passing of tzadikim is as difficult as the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash" and also "The death of tzadikim atones". It could be that since Nadav and Avihu gave their lives for the honor of the Mishkan so that Bnei Yisrael should not come to show disregard for it, one can therefore say that they were considered equal to the Mishkan. For just as the Mishkan atones, so the death of Nadav and Avihu atones. This is why we read the Parsha of Acharei Mot on Yom Kippur; just as the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash served as an atonement for Am Yisrael, so was death of Aharon's sons an atonement for Am Yisrael.

Concerning the idea mentioned previously that the sons of Aharon died because they went too far, one can say that Hashem never takes a person's soul immediately, but only if he goes too far and sins increasingly before Hashem. There is no way we can grasp what it means that Aharon's sons sinned, especially since the verse says about them (Vayikra 10:3), "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me" which shows how righteous and close to Hashem they were. But nevertheless this idea can arouse us to contemplate the fact that a person must repent for any small act that he commits so that G-d forbid his sins should not join up with each other, resulting in Hashem having to punish him in a difficult and painful way.

We must know that Hashem never punishes a person harshly immediately but rather first sends him signals and signs that can arouse him to repent. At first his suit may tear, after that the motor of his car may die in the middle of a journey and following that he may become sick with some slight disorder. If all this does not serve to bring him back from his evil ways, Hashem then strikes him with a difficult and painful tragedy, with the hope that maybe this time he will awaken from his slumber and return to Hashem (see Kidushin 20a).

In a similar way, we find that one who speaks lashon hara is not punished straight away with tzara'at on his body. Rather at first the walls of his home and his possessions are covered with tzara'at afflictions, after that are his clothes affected and if he still does not repent for his derogatory speech, Hashem sends afflictions on his flesh (Rambam, Tumat tzara'at 16:10).

As we mentioned, the main deterrent in Avodat Hashem is routine and habit. Many times we become blind to all the good things that surround us, since we have grown accustomed to them to the extent that we feel that it is natural for them to be part of our lives. It is only the sight of someone walking around with crutches or with a blind man's stick that has the power to arouse us to thank Hashem that we are walking on our feet while feeling healthy and well, and can see with our eyes all that is occurring around us.

Hashem approved of the way Aharon's sons acted, therefore He dedicated a Parsha to their name, that very Parsha that deals with the matter of the holiness of the Mikdash that they honored and elevated. Through them the honor of Hashem was sanctified, as it says "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest to Me."





Walking in their Ways

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

A Mussar Lesson

A yeshiva bachur once turned to me in consternation. "Rabbi David," he began, "for some reason I feel something is missing in my faith in Hashem, despite the fact that I spend my entire day studying Torah. I cannot learn with peace of mind when my mind is constantly occupied with this thought."

I turned the tables, asking him what he felt was the reason for this strange phenomenon. He thought for a few moments and then replied with the following: He thought his lack of emunah stemmed from the fact that the Rabbanim of the Yeshiva do not give their students enough mussar.

His sincere words struck home. I now understood the words of our Sages in a new light. The Mishnah (Avot 3:17) states, "If there is no worldly occupation, there is no Torah." The term "worldly occupation," or derech eretz, refers to the study of mussar, whereas "Torah" refers to faith and mitzvah observance.

Through mussar, which precedes faith and mitzvah observance, one learns how to approach mitzvot with the proper attitude – with fear and love of Hashem.

One day, a fine, orthodox Jew approached me and with a smile and a handshake, asked if I recognized him. I apologized that I did not and added that he was not the only one whose face I forgot, as I meet many people throughout the day and cannot possibly remember everyone.

He accepted my apology and introduced himself with the following tale. Twelve years earlier, when he had been light-years away from a Torah lifestyle, he had heard a mussar lecture which I delivered at the time. Recently, he remembered my words and they finally penetrated his heart. He decided to make a turnabout in his life, until he eventually returned completely to his Maker.

His story gave me great chizuk. The impact of one mussar lecture can never be underestimated! Even if the impression is not immediate, many years later it can still have an effect and cause people to return to their Creator.

The Haftarah

"The word of Hashem came to me, saying, **"Now you, 'Son of Man'"** (Yechezkel 22)

The connection to the Parsha: In the Haftarah, the Navi Yechezkel decries the sins of Am Yisrael, the types of which Am Yisrael is specifically warned about in the Parsha: not to behave like the abominations of the nations.

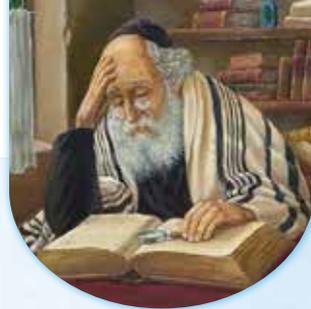
Ashkenazim read **"Behold, you are like the children of the Cushites"** (Amos 9) where it tells of the Kingdom of Yisrael, exiled because of the sins of the generation, as the Parsha says, **"Let not the land disgorge you for having contaminated it."**

Guard Your Tongue

What is Considered Beneficial Speech?

There are four main areas of beneficial speech where one is permitted to relate something derogatory:

1. To help the person in question, for example to discuss his shortcomings with someone so as to help him improve his ways.
2. To assist those who were negatively influenced by this person's conduct.
3. To offer help to someone who was harmed by him, physically, emotionally or financially. Or to protect others from future harm, which includes warning an unsuspecting individual who is about to enter into a partnership with him.
4. To help others learn from his mistakes.



In Our Father's Path

To Whom Did the Package of Wafers Belong?

The Torah opens a window for us into an original and unique way of thinking through the command, "with righteousness shall you judge your fellow". Chazal have explained that we come face to face with the practical application of this mitzvah when we see someone behaving inappropriately and his conduct seems questionable in our eyes. It is then that we must search for a way to defend him in our innermost thoughts; to set the wheels of our brain into motion so that we can retain our positive impression of him despite his behavior. He must remain exonerated in our eyes despite the fact that his conduct rouses our reservations.

This noble attribute has unique characteristics: First of all, in contrast to the conventional mindset, it is not considered a good middah or even a commendable quality. Rather it is one of the positive Torah commandments in every way, just as it is a mitzvah to recite the Shema every morning. Moreover, even if in the past we did not act this way and have already established in our minds that due to his conduct so and so is not a commendable individual, still, right this minute, we are commanded to change our opinion, modify our view of him and search for points of merit!

The following scenario unfolded in one of the hospitals. A Jewish patient entered a waiting room of one of the departments, placing at his side a bag containing several medical documents, plus a package of wafers that he had taken with him for a snack.

This person left the room for a moment, leaving the bag behind, while on the adjacent chair sat another Jewish patient. When he returned, he couldn't believe his eyes: the person sitting next to his place was holding the package of wafers in his hand, eating from it with obvious pleasure... The blatant injustice filled him with a feeling of great resentment; it was nothing less than daylight robbery! This person couldn't overcome the temptation and was polishing off his package of wafers that he had left in his bag?!

He hurried to sit down next to him and he too stuck his hand into the package of wafers. The other patient showed no sign of surprise and eagerly continued eating. The sight was both strange and comical at the same time; two strangers eating together from an as if 'shared' package of wafers, in hidden competition – who would manage to consume the most wafers.

When it came to the last wafer in the package, the owner was certain that the stranger would finally show some restraint and allow him to eat the last one. But that did not happen. With inexplicable impudence, he stuck his hand deep into the package and took out the last wafer. All that was left for our unfortunate friend to do was to throw the empty package in the garbage...

The behavior of this ill-mannered stranger caused his anger to rise. It was the doctor who saved the situation when he called out his name; fortunately, it was his turn to enter.

At the end of his appointment, he picked up his bag to insert the papers he had received and was struck with horror. His body began trembling uncontrollably and he turned extremely pale. There, lying serenely at the bottom of his bag, was his package of wafers! No one had touched it without permission. It seemed that he was the one who had taken wafer after wafer from his friend's package, with a blatant lack of manners. And he had even considered him a thief...

The story, brought in the kuntrus 'Vavei Ha'amudim', reverberates loud and clear: We can never know what caused someone to behave in a certain way. We can never assume where justice lies. All we can do is "with righteousness shall you judge your fellow", judge him favorably and consider as if his deeds were carried out with righteousness and integrity. This is our obligation!



Pearls of the Parsha

Filth will be Transformed into Shine

"For on this day He shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you; from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed" (Vayikra 16:30)

Why does one need further 'cleansing' after atonement?

The 'Ketav Vehakabalah' explains it in the following way:

Chazal say (Yoma 86b) that repentance has the power of transforming willful sins into merits. However, the term טהרה – cleansing- has two meanings. One is the removal of filth and waste, similar to טהור זהב- pure gold- gold that is refined and free of any base metal and waste. The second meaning is brightness and purity, as in the verse (Shemot 24:10), "like the essence of the heaven in purity".

Our verse is referring to both interpretations: "From all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed": If you try to cleanse yourselves and remove from yourselves any refuse and filth of sins and crimes, then "on this day He shall provide atonement for you to cleanse you". Hashem will remove and cleanse all your sins, and not only this but the actual dirt will become transformed into something polished and shining, for the sin itself will change into a merit.

Never Despair, No Matter the Situation

"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not complete the corner of your field to reap" (Vayikra 19:9)

The Holy Or HaChaim explains the juxtaposition of the previous verse which ends "and that soul will be cut off from its people" to the mitzvah of pe'ah-leaving a corner of the field unharvested- and leket- gleanings that must be left for the poor. The Torah is alluding to the fact that a willful sinner who is punished with the death penalty should not say that he no longer needs to abstain from doing bad since anyway he has already been sentenced to death.

Therefore, the Torah continues and says: "When you reap the harvest of your land". Even if a person caused "that we should reap the harvest of his land", meaning that he has been punished with karet-cutting off, nevertheless, "you shall not complete the corner of your field to reap" do not be tempted with additional bad deeds. This is because the punishment of karet does not affect the entire soul, rather only the part that is directly connected to this commandment. There are still other branches of the soul that will remain connected to their source. Since every Jewish soul has roots above, corresponding to all the mitzvot of the Torah, therefore even if one branch is cut off, he must still protect the other branches of his soul and take care that they should not be cut off.

Due to this the Torah commands, "the gleanings of your harvest you shall not take" with many different sins, for Hashem desires that through these remaining gleanings, the remaining good deeds, the person will be aroused to repent before Hashem and He will then have mercy on him. As Chazal say (Yoma 86a), even if a person transgresses sins that are deserving of kraitot and death by Beit Din, he can still atone for them, and "Great is repentance for it reaches right to the Throne of Glory".

This is How One Judges a Thief Favorably

"With righteousness shall you judge your fellow" (Vayikra 19:15)

It is related that once when Rabbi Zelmele of Volozhin was in the mikveh he noticed that his shirt had disappeared. What did he do? He put on his jacket without his shirt and returned home.

As soon as he entered his home his wife noticed his shirt was missing and asked: "Rabbi Zalman, where is your shirt?"

He replied, "Some pauper in the mikveh evidently exchanged it with his shirt by mistake."

"So why did you not take his shirt?"

"Because he forgot to leave it behind"...

Treasures

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



The Power of Influence

"Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled; and do not perform the practice of the land of Canaan to which I bring you, and do not follow their traditions" (Vayikra 18:3)

Would it occur to anyone that Am Yisrael, the Chosen Nation who had already received the Torah, would want to follow the practices of the nations? Furthermore, the Torah mentions following the practices of Egypt and Canaan, harsh and abominable nations. As we know, Am Yisrael only merited being redeemed from Egypt because they did not change their names, dress and language and did not intermingle with the Egyptians. If so, why did Hashem rush to command the Jewish people not to follow the traditions of the nations, when they themselves had already proved their great caution in guarding their Jewish identity?

This command seems comparable to commanding a wealthy person not to behave like a pauper. Just as that would seem superfluous, why did the Torah find it necessary to command the Chosen Nation not to behave like the most immodest and abominable nations of the world?

This can be explained according to the Chazal (see Rashi Bamidbar 15:39), "The eye sees and the heart desires". The way of the world is that the eye is drawn after material temptations, and while a person does not wish to behave like the lowlifes he sees on the street, against his will his heart is quickly drawn after his eyes and he suddenly finds himself transgressing the most severe sins. This being the case, it is clear to all that Bnei Yisrael themselves do not wish to follow the practices of the nations, but Hashem who examines thoughts and emotions is aware of man's nature and therefore found it necessary to command Am Yisrael about this matter. Bnei Yisrael themselves do not wish to resemble the nations, however, by seeing their deeds and contemplating their practices, they could slowly be drawn after them and actually commit these acts themselves.

When Bnei Yisrael were in Egypt, Hashem awarded them with special protection so that they should not assimilate with the Egyptians. Hashem knew that if Bnei Yisrael would take just one more small step and enter the fiftieth gate of impurity, their fall will be irreversible and they would no longer merit redemption from Egypt. Hashem therefore gave them special protection, for they had already fallen to the forty-ninth gate of impurity and as we mentioned, had they not abstained from intermarriage, there would have been no revival for them.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Hashem is Interested in Being Your Friend! - Good Friends? Here is Another Friend!

There is a close connection between this week's Parsha and the holy and sublime days of this period, the days of Sefirat Ha'Omer where we are required to rectify our middot and the way we relate to our fellow man.

The attribute of love and brotherhood between man and his fellow is extremely desirable, as the Admor of Rozhin expounds beautifully on the verse in this week's Parsha "You shall love your fellow as yourself, I am Hashem" (Vayikra 19:18). For when two Jews love each other with all their heart and are prepared to do anything for each other, in line with the concept of "you shall love your fellow as yourself", Hashem says to them: "I am Hashem"; I am interested in dwelling among you and joining, as if, your relationship.

The Gaon and tzadik Rabbi Aryeh Shechter zt"l relates a story (Aryeh Sha'ag) about two friends who were extremely devoted and faithful to one another, bound with heart and soul. It happened that some unscrupulous people falsely accused one of them and as a result he was brought to court and sentenced to death.

His faithful friend spared no effort, toil or trouble to do all he could to save his friend. But to his great sorrow, it was all to no avail.

When the appointed hour arrived and the condemned was about to be taken to the gallows, they turned to him as was the custom, allowing him to state his final request before being executed.

The man asked to be allowed to return home to his family, to his wife and children who were in a different country, so that he could take leave of them before his death. But his request was rejected out of fear that he would exploit the opportunity to escape and disappear.

This is where his good friend intervened and declared: "I am prepared to sit in prison as a hostage until my friend returns from his hometown. And if he doesn't return, I am prepared to be executed instead of him!"

Many tried to prevent this faithful friend from carrying out this dangerous plan, but out of his great love for his friend he refused to listen to them. He was happy to sit in jail, if it meant that his good friend could take one last look at his dear and beloved family and part from them before his death.

Time passed and the final day arrived; the condemned was supposed to return to the gallows but there was no sign of him! All the various advisors and sages mocked the friend who was still in jail, "We told you so! We warned you!" But the faithful friend claimed passionately, "Seemingly, for some compelling reason my friend was held back from returning, for if not he would certainly have come back on time! And even if he does not manage to return, I am prepared to die instead of him."

When the appointed hour came and the condemned had not yet returned to serve his sentence, they took his friend to the gallows and prepared to execute him.

At the last second, when the noose had already been tied around his neck, a horse came galloping up. It fell to the ground, thick lather flowing from its mouth, and the condemned jumped off it, crying out in alarm: "Did I manage to get here on time, or G-d forbid have I come too late? Is my good friend still alive?! I was delayed on the way through no fault of my own. I did all I could to get here on time so that my good friend should not die instead of me, G-d forbid!"

The two friends fell on each other's necks in tears, but a stormy argument quickly broke out between them. The friend who was already prepared for the gallows claimed: "They were about to execute me. I already made peace with the fact that I am about to depart from this world, therefore I am the one who should be killed, while you should return home in peace to your dear wife and children".

But the one condemned to death claimed to the contrary: "I was the one sentenced to death, there's no way that you are going to die in my place!" He begged the executioners, "Please, release my friend and let him live the remainder of his life in peace. Hang me as I was sentenced in the court case!"

A great tumult broke out at the site. Rather than carry out the sentence, it was pushed off for further clarification. The matter quickly came to the attention of the king who ordered the two friends to appear before him. They showed up at his palace and the king asked them to relate what had occurred.

The friends told the king the entire truth: "We are friends who are bound to each other with heart and soul. Each one of us prefers to give up his life so as to save his friend's life, even though in truth, each of us is innocent."

The king was deeply touched by these words and enthusiastically declared: "I am prepared to have compassion on both your lives on one condition: Allow me join your friendship; I strongly desire to be a third partner in this beautiful relationship!"

This is the meaning of the verse, "You shall love your fellow as yourself". If you love your friend just as you love yourself, then "I am Hashem". Hashem, as if, joins the relationship as a Holy partner.

This is true Ahavat Yisrael!