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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

The Essence of the Number Forty

"Like the number of days that you spied out the Land, forty days, a day for a year, a day for a year, shall you bear your iniquities – forty years – and you shall comprehend straying from Me" (Bamidbar 14:34)

This verse spells out how Hashem punished Am Yisrael for the sin of the spies, measure for measure. Just as they spied the Land for forty days with the intention of bringing back a negative report, Hashem kept them in the Wilderness for one year corresponding to each of the forty days, in place of bringing them immediately to Eretz Yisrael.

The question arises: Since all is revealed before Hashem and He is aware of all that will transpire in the future, why did Hashem not cause the spies to travel the Land for ten days so that Am Yisrael's punishment would be lighter and they would only need to wander around and be held up in the Wilderness for ten years instead of forty?

In addition, it is well-known that corresponding to that day, which was the ninth of Av, when Bnei Yisrael cried for no reason, Hashem decreed that all future generations would cry about the destruction of both Batei Mikdash on that night (Ta'anit 29a). So if the reason for the destruction was due to the sin of the Spies, why are we forbidden to study Torah on Tisha B'Av? What is the connection between their sin, the needless crying of Am Yisrael, and the prohibition of studying Torah on this day? On the contrary, there is seemingly no day more suitable than this to utilize for Torah study and cleaving to our Creator.

To answer this question, we will draw a parallel to the laws of a mourner, who is also forbidden to study Torah during the days of mourning. Here too, a similar question arises. The way of the world is that when a person is mourning a loved one, he is aroused to draw closer to our Father in Heaven. So why especially during this time of potential arousal is a person forbidden to study Torah and thereby coming closer to Hashem?

The reason is because Torah study brings a person great joy, and since it is not fitting for the honor of the deceased to rejoice during the week of mourning, the Torah therefore forbids a person to study Torah during this time so that he can concentrate on his pain and thereby pay his last respects to the deceased.

According to this, one can posit that since the Torah brings a person joy, it is therefore an enormous merit to engage in Torah study. So the fact that Hashem forbade Bnei Yisrael to study Torah on Tisha B'Av, is a demonstration of His great anger. Since they sinned before Him, He withheld from them the joy of Torah by forbidding Torah study on Tisha B'Av. The prohibition of studying Torah on Tisha B'Av is itself a punishment.

As far as the question we asked above, as to why Hashem did not cause the spies to spend less time spying the Land if He knew they would sin and would be punished with one year for every day, one can say that the number forty is significant, as it alludes to the Holy Torah which was given in forty days and nights. And why was the Torah given particularly in forty days and nights, and not a different number? The number forty corresponds to the first

forty days following the conception of a fetus, after which it is considered a live being. As long as the fetus has not reached this stage it does not have this status.

Hashem gave Am Yisrael the Torah in forty days and nights to instill in them the idea that up until this point they did not have the status of living beings. Only once they received the Torah were they considered 'alive', for Torah is man's source of vitality, as it says (Mishlei 3:18), "It is a tree of life to those who grasp it."

When Am Yisrael accepted the lashon hara related by the spies, this blemished the Holy Torah which tells us (Vayikra 19:16), "You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people." That blemish subtracted from their vitality so much so that Hashem had to make them wander in the Wilderness for forty years, during which they would re-inherit this life force and merit accepting the Torah anew. With this power they would then be able to enter Eretz Yisrael and conquer all their enemies.

This is the reason why Hashem forbade Am Yisrael to study Torah on Tisha B'Av. Besides the fact that Torah study brings us joy and Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning, the fact that Bnei Yisrael blemished the Torah through believing lashon hara took away their merit to engage in the Torah. Their sadness and sorrow on Tisha B'Av serves to reawaken their hearts to their Father in Heaven and seek His closeness, the closeness of Torah.

When Am Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, Hashem forgave them for their sin and did not make them wander in the Wilderness, whereas with the sin of the spies, a seemingly less severe sin, Hashem punished them with all the severity of judgement.

The reason could be that when Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe Rabbeinu had not yet returned from Heaven with the Torah, so Hashem was less exacting with them. With the Spies, this sin was committed after they had already received the Torah, and with it the warning of the severity of lashon hara. Similarly, Eretz Yisrael is directly connected to the words of the Holy Torah due to the special mitzvot dependent on the Land which the Torah delineates. Hashem wanted to teach Am Yisrael that anyone who is negligent with the holiness of the Land is also blemishing the holiness of the Torah, and that is why his sin is extremely great.

Since Am Yisrael spoke negatively about Eretz Yisrael, blemishing both the holiness of the Land and the holiness of the Torah itself, measure for measure Hashem punished them by forbidding them to study Torah on Tisha B'Av. Withholding from them the joy of Torah on this sad day will cause them to long to return and connect with it once again. Hashem intentionally wanted the spies to spy out the Land for forty days, so they could be punished specifically with wandering in the Wilderness for forty years, corresponding to the forty days and nights in which the Torah was given. Each of those 40 years of wandering were needed, as through them they regained their 'life' by re-accepting the Torah, thereby reacquiring the merit needed for entering and inheriting Eretz Yisrael.



Walking in their Ways

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

Percolating in Prayer

The Benaroch family of Paris is well known for their acts of chessed. The mother of this illustrious family once suffered a stroke and, as a result, was seriously paralyzed. The doctors did not give her much hope of recovering. They told her family, "Your mother will live, but she will be paralyzed for life."

The family stormed the Heavens for salvation. They approached me and asked that I bless her with a complete recovery, in the merit of my holy ancestors zy"a. I knew that Mrs. Benaroch was a tremendous ba'alat chessed who gave untold sums to tzedakah. Therefore, I did not satisfy myself with merely blessing her. I wished to visit her, as well.

I entered her room to find her lying in bed unmoving, connected to various tubes and machines. But I had a mission to accomplish - to provide encouragement to the sick woman. I said, "For such a woman of valor as you, the Creator will surely bring a cure! B'ezrat Hashem, I will yet come to drink coffee in your house and you yourself will prepare the coffee and serve it!"

All those present responded with a resounding, "Amen!" The woman, with the force of her belief in Hashem, said, "Honored Rav, I have complete faith that Hashem will send His deliverance. As proof, I would like someone to go to my house right now and put up the water to boil for the Rav's coffee."

Hashem's kindness knows no bounds. The paralyzed Mrs. Benaroch recovered and was released from hospital. I visited her at home and saw her walk like a regular person. Baruch Hashem, she merited a complete recovery, and is able to move her limbs as before her stroke. In order to complete my blessing, she herself prepared cups of coffee for us all.

The Haftarah

"Yehoshua son of Nun dispatched" (Yehoshua 2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the two spies Yehoshua Bin Nun sent to spy out the Promised Land. In the Parsha, we are told about the spies Moshe Rabbeinu sent to spy out the Land.

Guard Your Tongue

Refraining from Speaking and Adding Words

Even when derogatory information may be related for a beneficial purpose, it is better to refrain whenever possible. If there is another way to achieve the desired result, one is obligated to use this option.

Similarly, if it is necessary to relate the derogatory information, one should carefully weigh and consider how much is actually important to say. Any extra, unnecessary derogatory words are considered lashon hara.



In Our Father's Path

Whatever the Rav Does There Will Be Complaints

Several times during Bnei Yisrael's travels in the Wilderness, we find they turned to their leader and savior with various complaints, not finding favor with the Divine Providence which directed their lives.

The Gaon Rabbi Ya'akov Eidelstein zt"l related (Gaon Ya'akov Sivan 5779) that a community in America once sent a request to the elders of Yerushalayim, requesting a Rav – a Talmid Chacham with a broad knowledge of Torah who will be able to answer any question that might arise.

The elders sent a choice avreich from the Eitz Chaim Yeshiva, a great Gaon exceptionally well-versed in Torah, HaRav Shlomo Nosson Kotler. He arrived in America shortly thereafter to fill the position.

Unfortunately, when it came to Torah knowledge and the concept of Torah study, the community leaders were ignorant and totally unaware of what it really meant to be a talmid chacham. After a short while, a letter arrived in Yerushalayim from the community leaders, with a harsh complaint. "Why did you deceive us? We consider the appointment of this Rav to be a mistaken deal. Why? Because we asked for a learned Rav who is already well-versed in Torah. But we noticed that in Rabbi Shlomo Nosson's house, the lights burn way after midnight. We observed him to see what he does so late at night (we did not want to suspect that he was playing cards, G-d forbid), and discovered that he is sitting at his table surrounded by a pile of books, and writing in a notebook. Since he is engaged in studying and taking examinations, it seems he has not yet finished his studies. Had he already completed all the required syllabus, why would he still be perusing study books?! In light of this, we have decided to fire the Rav!"

Clearly these community leaders are unfortunate fellows, lacking the slightest understanding of Torah diligence. They are comparing the mistress to her maidservants, measuring what they see with the thought process of the secular world. For the wisdom of Torah, mussar and the fear of G-d, is unlike any other wisdom.

This story stands in contrast to the following story that took place in a small village in Poland. These villagers also decided to fire their Rav, but their reason was slightly different: Passing his home several times at midnight, they noticed that the house was dark and took this as a sign that the Rav was not diligent enough in Torah Study. However, what they did not realize was the true reason for the darkness: The Rav was so poor he had no money to light candles, so he would learn in the dark by heart!

Why, in fact, is a Torah sage termed by Chazal 'Talmid Chacham – wise student'? Our Torah Sages are mature or elderly people, long past the stage of apprenticeship. The reason is because their entire lives they retain the mindset of a student and aspire to study ever more Torah.

This is the meaning of the declaration of Ben Zoma in Avot: "Who is wise? He who learns from every person." A wise person is one who continues to learn, because he realizes that his knowledge is incomplete. However much he has already learnt, there is still so much more to add in levels of Torah, Mussar and Yirat Shamayim.

This outlook is not on par with those who study secular wisdoms, for whom toil is only necessary when a student is preparing for a test. If he passes the examination and has a good grasp of all he is required to know, for example in engineering or mathematics, he has completed the required syllabus and is no longer considered a student.

Shlomo Hamelech expressed this idea with the following words (Mishlei 22): "Train the youth according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not swerve from it." The Mussar commentaries explain that the end of the verse is a guide to the goal we must instill in the youth in his younger years. We must educate him in a way that even when he grows old he will not stop educating himself and working on himself, ascending from level to level. The phrase "he will not swerve from it" implies that even in his later years he will not cease training himself.



Pearls of the Parsha

Repentance can Annul the Oath

"If they will see the Land that I have sworn to give their forefathers! – and all who anger Me shall not see it" (Bamidbar 14:23)

Rashi explains the words "If they will see" as "they will not see." So why does the verse not say this explicitly, just as it concludes "all those who anger Me shall not see it"?

Rabbi Yitzchak Chasson zt"l, in his sefer Ohel Yitzchak, quotes the Rambam who expounds in the laws of Teshuva (3:14) that even if someone commits sins which could cause him to lose his share in the World to Come, this only refers to someone who dies without doing teshuva.

But if he repents from his wicked ways before he dies, he will be given a share in the World to Come, for there is nothing that stands in the way of repentance. Even if his entire life he denied G-d's existence but repented at the last moment, he will inherit a share in the World to Come.

In addition, the Gemara says (Rosh Hashanah 18a) that even if Hashem already swore to punish the sinner, nevertheless if he engages in Torah, Hashem forgives him. Even though it says "The sin... would never be atoned for by sacrifice or meal-offering," this means by sacrifice or meal-offering it will not be atoned, but by Torah it is atoned." This rule excludes someone who makes others sin, about whom it says (Avot 5:18), "One who influences the masses to sin will not be given the means to repent."

Now we can understand the meaning of the verse. Even though Hashem swore that anyone who accepted the bad report about the Land would not merit entering it, as it says "But as I live..." (Bamidbar 14:21), and according to Rashi this expression is an oath, nevertheless this is contingent, for if they repent and engage in Torah they will be allowed to enter the Land. This is why the verse begins "If they will see", expressing doubt, rather than "they will not see" a conclusive expression.

However, the spies who spoke negatively about the Land and caused others to sin, thereby lost their means to repent. Concerning them the verse concludes "all who anger Me shall not see it" in line with the Mishna in Avot.

The Deeper Meaning

"See the Land – how is it?" (Bamidbar 13:18)

The sefer Ravid Hazahav quotes Rabbi

Naftali of Ropshitz zt"l who explains the verse as an allusion.

"See the Land – mah hi." See if the Land is 'mah – what', if it leads to a feeling of humility "for what are we?" (Shemot 16:7).

"Is it strong or weak?" Are the people who dwell in the Land a weak nation, as in "a heart broken and humbled", even though they are strong?

"Is it few or numerous?" Does the nation consider itself small, even while they are numerous and large?

"Are there trees [tzadikim] in it – im ayin – or not?" And is the tzadik humble, as in "ayin – nothingness"?

The above attributes characterize one who is blessed with the attribute of humility. A humble person is slow to grow angry. Moshe Rabbeinu asked the spies to check specifically for this attribute among those who dwelt in the Land, to determine if their resistance would be tough and wrathful, and so he could guide the people as to how to approach the Land accordingly.

Repentance Sanctifies the Name of Heaven

"And now – may the strength of my Lord be magnified as You have spoken, saying... Forgive now the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your kindness... And Hashem said, 'I have forgiven because of your words'" (Bamidbar 14:17-20)

Rabbeinu Chaim ben Attar zy"a, in his Holy sefer Or HaChaim, explains the significance of Moshe prefacing his words with "And now". When the wicked improve their ways and repent, this sanctifies Hashem's Name. The world sees an increase in the force of Holiness through the elimination of the force of evil.

This is why our Sages declared, "In the place where the repentant stand, absolute tzadikim cannot stand" for the repentant merit sanctifying G-d's Name in a loftier way.

This idea is alluded to in the way Moshe Rabbeinu spoke to Hashem. Chazal have taught us that the word 've-ata – and now' is always a reference to the mitzvah of repentance. Here Moshe Rabbeinu was asking Hashem to accept the people's repentance and forgive their sin, for this would lead to a magnification of His strength.

This also explains the following verse, "But as I live – and the glory of Hashem shall fill the entire world"; through their repentance His Name is sanctified and His glory is exalted.

Treasures

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



The Benefits of Kindness

"Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying. 'Send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel; one man each from his father's tribe shall you send, each one a leader among them'" (Bamidbar 13:1-2)

The initials of the words "Shelach lecha anashim – send forth men" spell 'eshel', while the last letters spell 'chacham – wise'. My son, Rabbi Moshe n"y, explains that the word 'chacham' hinted to in the verse alludes to the fact that Moshe was commanded to send forth wise, righteous men to spy out the Land.

The allusion to 'eshel' can be explained in the following way. Hashem turned to Avraham Avinu and commanded him, "Go for yourself to the land that I will show you." Rashi: Go for yourself – for your good and your pleasure. Despite Avraham Avinu being unaware of his destination, he withstood the test and followed Hashem's command. When Avraham arrived in Eretz Yisrael, he travelled its length and breadth out of joy in fulfillment of the mitzvah of dwelling in the Holy Land. We also find that Avraham planted an 'eshel' through which he proclaimed the Name of Hashem and brought many people to repentance.

This idea teaches us that when a person loves others and wishes to do kindness with them, he is thereby testifying that he is connected to Hashem and a partner in His attribute of kindness. From this attribute of kindness, a person receives strength to withstand all the challenges that come his way and the result will be a feeling of pleasure and delight from his acts of kindness. I would like to suggest that since, through the attribute of kindness that was deeply ingrained in him, Avraham converted people already while he lived in Charan, Hashem therefore told him, go for yourself – for your pleasure and for your good – to the place where the very atmosphere makes you wise, as we are told (Baba Basra 158b), "The atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise." Due to that atmosphere, his attribute of kindness will intensify even more and he will merit cleaving and connecting to Hashem in a stronger fashion.

By saying "Send forth men", alluding to the eshel of Avraham Avinu, Hashem was hinting to Moshe to send men who possess a love of kindness so they should not be negatively influenced by the wicked people they come across. This type of person will also look at the Land with a positive eye and not wish to speak negatively about it. Through the leaders praising the Land, they will be performing a kindness for Am Yisrael who will wish to enter the Land and thereby benefit from its special atmosphere which makes a person wise.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

Who Can Bring Merit to the Masses?

Moshe was Meritorious and Influenced the Masses to be Meritorious, so their Merit was to his Credit

Maran HaGaon Rabbi Gershon Eidelstein shlita relates that when the Gaon Rabbi Yissachar Meir zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Hanegev, would travel to Chutz L'aretz to fundraise for his Yeshiva, some philanthropists had compassion on him because he was sick and weak. When they saw how he went to the trouble of coming to them with self-sacrifice despite his weakness, they donated to him out of compassion for him, not out of love for Torah. Rabbi Yissachar zt"l however would say that they ended up with a love for Torah too, since through the money they contributed for the Yeshiva, they enabled others to have the merit of engaging in Torah study and measure for measure, in the merit of the Torah, they too merited a love for Torah.

But the Rosh Yeshiva added that besides this, it also affords them the merit of studying Torah in the World to Come. Rabbi Ben Tzion Bamberger zt"l told over a story about someone who passed away and instructed that part of his inheritance should be given to Torah institutions. The deceased appeared in a dream and related words of the Rashba in Gittin by heart, despite never studying Torah in his life and not being familiar with the Rashba. Since with the money he donated, the Yeshiva bought a Rashba and studied from it (at that time they were learning Masechet Gittin), he too merited studying the words of the Rashba in the Heavenly Yeshiva!

This is the idea of bringing merit to the public. Only someone who himself has merits can merit the public, as Chazal say (Avot 5:18), "Moshe was meritorious and influenced the masses to be meritorious, so the merit of the masses was to his credit." First it says he was meritorious and then it says he caused the public to be meritorious. The opposite is also true; if one's own merits decrease, one's ability to bring merit to the public decreases accordingly.

Maran HaRav Eidelstein shlita relates: "I am personally familiar with someone who

merited the public, but then unfortunately went through a decline in his own merits. Due to this, he lost the opportunity of meriting the public. After repenting and restoring his merits, he once again merited to be able to influence the public with renewed strength. It is tested and proven – this is the reality. If one disregards bringing merit to the public, one loses this opportunity and if one strengthens oneself in influencing the public, one merits bringing even more merit to the public.

"Moshe was meritorious and influenced the masses to be meritorious, so the merit of the masses was to his credit." With all the merits Moshe Rabbeinu had – his attribute of humility, being the humblest of all men, his love of others, as the Midrash explains that he showed compassion even for animals – he merited influencing the people to become meritorious by being the one to receive the Torah from Sinai and transmitting it to Bnei Yisrael. "The merit of the masses is to his credit" – this means all the Torah and good deeds of Bnei Yisrael throughout the generations is attributed to his merit because we engage in it in his merit. Every time we study Torah, we are performing a kindness with Moshe Rabbeinu by crediting him with additional merits.

In truth, it seems surprising. Does Moshe Rabbeinu lack merits that he requires these additional merits? But the reality is, the pleasures of the World to Come are infinite and immeasurable. In This World, once a person becomes accustomed to a certain pleasure it no longer brings him delight; in the World to Come, the pleasure renews itself constantly and he delights in it to no end.

So despite Moshe Rabbeinu's lofty level and unfathomable portion in the World to Come, nevertheless those pleasures are infinite and the more we add to his merits, the more his share in the World to Come grows. As we know, if one merits the public with Torah and good deeds, the merit of all those he influences to behave in this way, until the end of all generations, is attributed to him. Even if he has already passed away, he continues to receive additional pleasures that we cannot imagine.

In the 'declaration of intent' prayer before laying Tefillin, we pray for 'holy thoughts'. It is not just a request for the absence of forbidden thoughts; we also do not wish to entertain worldly thoughts, only holy thoughts of Torah and faith.

This is in fact a very high level not everyone is capable of attaining. It is impossible to achieve it in one leap; rather one must

progress according to one's strength, and with time one becomes accustomed to this, until one's thoughts are automatically drawn to words of Torah, out of its inherent sweetness and appeal. Only one who is capable of reaching this level but is negligent in pursuing it will be held accountable; one for whom this attainment is impossible will not be blamed.

During the time of the Gaon Rabbi Baruch Ber zt"l, the study of mussar had not yet become an established subject in most Yeshivot, including his Yeshiva, Kneset Beit Yitzchak. Someone once spoke to him regarding the importance of studying mussar and Rabbi Baruch Ber agreed that mussar increases one's Yirat Shamayim. Rabbi Baruch Ber himself began studying mussar but the very next day said he realizes it is not the right thing for him to do. That night, after studying mussar, he could not sleep the entire night! Indeed, Rabbi Baruch, on his level, did not need to study mussar because he never diverted his attention from matters of faith.

The Alter of Kelm zt"l explained why we do not find that the Rishonim had a fixed study session for learning Mussar. Although there are Mussar sefarim written by the Rishonim, and even the Sha'arei Teshuva of Rabbeinu Yona (2:15) writes that one must conduct a soul-reckoning every day, Mussar was not an established part of their daily study schedule as is the custom today. The Alter of Kelm said that the prayers of the Rishonim had the same effect on them as studying Mussar, because they prayed in the appropriate fashion, with their entire heart. As the Kuzari explains, prayer has the effect of strengthening one's faith and purity of soul.

In relation to this idea, we can share an insight into Rabbi Baruch Ber's devotion to Torah. It is well-known that wherever the Germans ym"sh went, they killed every Jew in sight. However, when they came to Kaminetz, the hometown of Rabbi Baruch Ber, they did not touch the Jews. On the contrary, they treated Rabbi Baruch Ber with great respect and promised to help him with whatever he needs. This was in direct contrast to the cruel nature of the Germans ym"sh. Heaven watched over Rabbi Baruch Ber and his Torah protected the entire city.

After his passing, the Chazon Ish declared that if Rabbi Baruch Ber would have lived, there would not have been a Holocaust! His supreme devotion to Torah would have protected the entire generation and prevented the destruction. But "because of the impending evil the righteous one was gathered in" (Yeshaya 57:1).