

# Mattot Masei

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## Hilula

1 - Rabbi Avraham Yisrael Ze'evi, Rav of Chevron

2 - Rabbi Aharon Te'umim of Cracow

3 - Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, hy"d

4 - Rabbi Shimon Biderman

5 - Rabbeinu Yitzchak Luria Ashkenazi, the Ari HaKadosh

6 - Rabbi Moshe Ezra Mizrachi

7 - Rabbi Shalom Noach Barzovski, Admor of Slonim

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

## Gentle Words of the Wise

**"Moshe was angry with the commanders of the army, the officers of the thousands and the officers of the hundreds, who came from the legion of the battle"** (Bamidbar 31:14)

When Bnei Yisrael returned from the war against Midian, they brought the Midianite women back with them. Moshe Rabbeinu was angry, for these women were the ones who had seduced Bnei Yisrael to sin with Ba'al Peor, therefore they should have rather been killed.

Chazal say (Pesachim 66b), "One who becomes angry, if he is wise his wisdom departs from him. From whom do we learn this? From Moshe Rabbeinu, as it says, 'Moshe was angry with the commanders of the army.'" Regarding this Chazal say, "Since Moshe Rabbeinu became angry, he erred and forgot the laws of purging utensils acquired from non-Jews, and Elazar HaKohen had to tell Bnei Yisrael these laws."

In reference to this, Maran HaGaon the Rishon Letzion, Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef zt"l, writes: Chazal tell us (Ta'anit 4a), Rava said, if a Torah scholar is angry with someone, it is not he who is angry but the Torah inside him, as it says (Yirmiyahu 23:29), "Behold, My word is like fire". The Gemara continues: Ravina said, despite this the Torah scholar must accustom himself to speak gently, as it says (Kohelet 11:10), "banish anger from your heart."

In addition, the words of the Rambam (Hilchot De'ot 2:3), are well-known: "Anger is a very despicable trait and it is fitting for man to distance himself from it to the other extreme and teach himself not to become angry even for a seemingly legitimate reason."

The Rishon Letzion explains, when the Gemara defines the anger of a Talmid Chacham as the Torah inside him causing him to become irate, the meaning is that the Talmid Chacham is angry for Heaven's sake. He is disturbed by those who anger Hashem with their evil ways so he expresses anger to return them to the correct path. This kind of anger is permissible.

Nevertheless, the Talmid Chacham must accustom himself to behave in a gentle manner as the Rambam concludes: "If he is a communal leader and wishes to get angry with the congregation so they will return to the correct path, he should make as if he is angry with them, but in his heart he should not feel anger."

It follows that a communal leader may outwardly show anger with the congregation to bring them back to the correct path. And if he is a Talmid Chacham, it is the Torah that rages inside him and he is angry for Heaven's sake.

According to this, a question arises regarding Moshe's seemingly 'permissible' anger with the army officers. Why indeed did Moshe Rabbeinu forget those laws if his intention was for Heaven's sake? He was angry because he saw them returning with the Midianite women, the same women who caused a great plague among Bnei Yisrael and the death of 24,000 as a result of their sin with Ba'al Peor.

We can explain it in the following way: Moshe Rabbeinu personally heard from the officers that they returned from the battle in peace, as they explicitly said (Bamidbar 31:49), "Your servants took a census of the men of war under our command and not a man of us is missing." Meaning, they told Moshe their spiritual level of holiness also remained intact, despite it being a very difficult battle.

So if, despite all the disturbances and impediments during the battle, all the officers returned alive and well from this dangerous battle, it is a sign they are all righteous. They did not stumble, G-d forbid, with immoral conduct with the Midianite women, despite stumbling with these women in the past.

If this was the situation, why did Moshe Rabbeinu grow angry with them? Why did he have to make as if he was angry with them, if they had not sinned with non-Jewish women?

Because of the honor of Bnei Yisrael and the army officers who despite the battle retained their holiness, Moshe Rabbeinu was punished by forgetting the laws of purging vessels acquired from non-Jews. It was a demonstration to the entire world that Hashem does not excuse anyone, not even Moshe Rabbeinu, Hashem's faithful servant, if He sees he is not behaving appropriately. Despite Moshe Rabbeinu acting for the sake of Heaven, with completely holy intentions, nevertheless he should have realized that this anger was not in place.

It is possible to say that Moshe was angry with the officers for perhaps entertaining contemplations of sin. True not one of them died, and all remained righteous and did not sin with the women, nevertheless Moshe Rabbeinu saw with Divine Inspiration that these women caused Bnei Yisrael to entertain sinful thoughts on their return from Midian.

But since Moshe Rabbeinu was angry only due to ruminations of sin, he was punished since Hashem does not excuse anyone, not even tzadikim. A Talmid Chacham must always conduct himself in a pleasant manner and take care not to feel anger, even in his heart.



## Walking in their Ways

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

### Eating His Cake

A man once came to me who had been diagnosed with a fatal illness. Since his life was hanging in the balance, he asked for my blessing in the merit of my holy ancestors, before going under the surgeon's scalpel. To add validation to my blessing, I handed the man a slice of cake and instructed him to eat it before the operation. I also said, "If you have faith in Hashem and in the merit of tzadikim, strengthen your level of Torah and yirat Shamayim and promise that from today on you will improve your ways."

Before operating, the surgeon told the sick man this was to be a fateful and decisive operation. If he has faith in a Creator, he should pray with all his heart that he survive the operation and be granted a complete recovery.

The man did as his doctor advised him. He prayed from the depths of his heart that Hashem heal him. He then went through all the pre-op procedures. Suddenly, he remembered the slice of cake I had told him to eat before he went under, so he asked the surgeon for permission to eat the cake.

It is universally known that before an operation a person must fast, not eating or drinking even the smallest thing. But this case was different. The surgeon thought to himself, "This man is on the brink of death in any event. Why not let him enjoy one last piece of cake?" To the sick man, he said, "If you have a promise from a Rabbi, eat your cake in good health and save some for after the operation!" He instructed the patient to place a few crumbs in his mouth, since eating was forbidden.

During the course of the operation, the surgeon realized the patient's situation was hopeless. There was simply nothing to save. So he sewed up the site of the incision without doing a thing. When the man awoke, his doctor told him, "Eat up the rest of the cake." To his family, the doctor related that there was nothing left to do for their relative.

The man faithfully ate the cake. After a short while, he said he was feeling noticeably better. The perplexed doctors observed that instead of deteriorating, his condition improved from day to day.

A battery of tests indicated the man was in the stage of recovery. He eventually recovered completely! This caused a tremendous kiddush Hashem among the doctors.

## The Haftarah

**"Hear the word of Hashem"** (Yirmiyahu 2)

The connection to the Parshah: This Haftarah is the second of the three special Haftarat established by Chazal to be read during the three weeks leading up to Tisha B'Av. They talk about Yirmiyahu HaNavi's prophecy of calamity concerning the destruction of Yerushalayim and our glorious Beit Hamikdash.

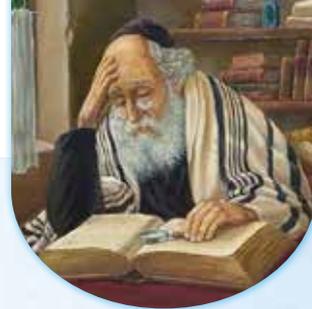
The custom is to read two additional verses from the Haftarah of Rosh Chodesh, **"Thus said Hashem: The Heaven is My throne."** (Yeshaye 66)

## Guard Your Tongue

### Gently and with Sensitivity

If one must relate derogatory words for the sake of helping someone rectify his middot, that is considered a constructive purpose.

If someone's middot require refinement, the mitzvah of rebuking one's fellow obligates us to bring this matter to his attention in a gentle and sensitive manner. But, if a person feels he is not capable of rebuking another and knows others who are also aware of his faults, he is permitted to speak to them about this and ask their advice, or ask for their intervention if necessary.



## In Our Father's Path

### A Ben Torah is not Always Obligated to Reply

The power inherent in the mouths of Am Yisrael is considered their craftsmanship, as Rashi expounds (Bamidbar 31:8). What is the idea behind this? The Chafetz Chaim writes that just as the most proficient craftsman requires tools to create the product he wishes to sell, so too every Jew, who is endowed with great power to effect the Upper Worlds, requires professional tools with which to act. It is his mouth that serves as his tool.

If the artist in the parable uses defective tools, all his skills and capabilities will not be of use to him; the product he creates will be unsuitable for use. Similarly, if a Jew does not guard the holiness and purity of his mouth and ensure it remains fit for the service of Hashem, his prayers and Torah study will hardly have any value, G-d forbid! Not only this, but the Chafetz Chaim quotes the Holy Alshich zy"l: prayers and Torah study uttered by an unclean mouth awaken terrible accusations against the person who is praising and glorifying his Creator using a filthy, foul tool. This is a horrifying declaration!

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer Otzroteihem Amaleh, tells about a group of bachurim who accompanied Maran the Chazon Ish zt"l on his daily walk, using the opportunity to discuss Torah ideas. A simple Jew passed by, a complete ignoramus, and began taunting them. One of the bachurim was blessed with a sharp tongue and he replied with a fitting, witty retort. He was sure the Chazon Ish would enjoy his answer but the Chazon Ish said to him: "You didn't answer well!" The bachur was surprised and asked, "So what should I have said?"

"Nothing!" replied the Chazon Ish with due seriousness. "A ben Torah is not always required to answer!"

A similar story happened with Maran HaGaon Rav Elyashiv zt"l. Every Shavuot, as was his custom, he would leave his Beit Midrash in the Me'ah She'arim district early in the morning, to walk to the Western Wall for the Mussaf prayer. He would walk at the forefront of a large group of worshippers who followed behind him.

This large group of men walking together through the city streets was a prominent sight and every so often, when they passed close to Arabs or irreligious Jews, they would yell derogatory, abusive words and curses. HaRav Elyashiv instructed them not to pay any attention to these people or answer them, explaining that the mouth of a ben Torah is a precious vessel destined for spirituality, Torah study and prayer, and is not something to be used for just any need that arises!

The words of Gedolim and tzadikim carry enormous weight and this can be clearly seen. The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita relates a story about the famous tzadik from Netivot, Rabbi Yisrael Abuchatzera zt"l, the Baba Sali. He was once sitting and learning on Shabbat when suddenly the oil light fell on the floor and the flame caused the carpet to catch fire. The Baba Sali looked at the fire and, as if talking to it, said: "Here in this house we observe Shabbat; you have no permission to burn here!" And the fire stopped in its tracks!

The Baba Sali was a holy tzadik and exceptional talmid chacham. This story is not something miraculous, it is a demonstration of the basic strength of the power of speech. It is a power that every Jew could possess, if he would only guard his mouth appropriately!



## Pearls of the Parsha

### Speech is Part of the Soul

*"He shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do" (Bamidbar 30:3)*

The Be'er Moshe quotes the Chacham Rabbi Shorak z"l who says a person should not desecrate his words, rather all that he utters he must fulfil, whether good or bad. In this way he creates either defenders or accusers. As the Holy Zohar says, "Come and see, the word that comes out of a person's mouth goes up to Heaven and makes an impression Above for good or for bad."

This is just like what happens when a person speaks; his mouth produces vapor and that vapor is part of him. The proof is that when the soul leaves the body, he is left with neither vapor nor speech, so it follows that the vapor that comes out his mouth when speaking is part of his soul. This is why we have been commanded not to speak idle gossip, for one thereby releases part of one's soul.

### Names Auspicious for Protection

*"A thousand men from a tribe, a thousand from a tribe, for all the tribes of Israel shall you send to the legion" (Bamidbar 31:4)*

The Ben Ish Chai writes the following: Those accompanying one who sets out on a journey should quote the ruling, "יחדי ורבים הלכה כרבים" – If there is a difference of opinion between an individual and the majority, we rule according to the majority" and should have in mind the Name יהו"ך, represented by the initial letters of this ruling. For this Name, also alluded to by the final letters of the words כִּי מְלֹאכֵי יִצוּה לְךָ – He will charge His angels for you (to protect you in all your ways), affords protection while travelling.

The Name כל"ך also has this power of protection. The first letter of the word כִּי represents the letter כ, while the two final letters of the Name are represented by the word מְלֹאכֵי. These two names have a numerical value of 111, the same value as the word אֶלֶף, a thousand.

This is the meaning of the verse, "A thousand [men] from a tribe, a thousand from a tribe." It was a hint for Moshe to draw upon an influence of protection for each tribe, from these two Names that have the value of אֶלֶף. In this way, "for all the tribes of Israel", whether fitting or not, "shall you send to the legion", for there will be no Satan or evil mishap.

### A Safe Haven for Every Jew

*"The six cities of refuge that you shall provide for a murderer to flee there, and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities" (Bamidbar 35:6)*

The six cities of refuge, the Ohev Yisrael of Apter used to say, are the six words of the verse "Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad." In these words, every Jewish person must find a safe haven to maintain tranquility, at every hour and every moment.

"In addition to them you shall give forty-two cities:" This is a reference to the forty-two words in the section of "Ve'avavta – And you shall love" in Kriyat Shema, through which a person strengthens and fortifies himself in the service of Hashem. In these words, he finds refuge from the malicious waters of the lowly world.

### The Troubles of the Public

*"He shall dwell in it until the death of the Kohen Gadol, whom one had anointed with the sacred oil" (Bamidbar 35:25)*

The question arises, why does the Torah make the stay of the unintentional murderer in the city of refuge dependent on the death of the Kohen Gadol?

The Rambam (Moreh Nevuchim 3:40) explains that the death of the Kohen Gadol may quell the relative's anger over the murder of his next of kin. For it is human nature that a new and important event makes one forget the previous. When the beloved Kohen Gadol passes away, the relative's anger will be mitigated because great pain makes one forget a lesser pain, and a hardship shared by the public is half the comfort...

## Treasures

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



### The Mitzvot Within Speech

*"If a man takes a vow to Hashem or swears an oath to establish a prohibition upon himself, he shall not desecrate his word; according to whatever comes from his mouth shall he do" (Bamidbar 30:3)*

The sefer Yeshuot Ya'akov quotes the Ben Ish Chai zy"l who writes on this verse: "Every single utterance is a complete mitzvah in itself, for example the mitzvah of counting the Omer where the actual uttering is the completion of the mitzvah. Sometimes the aspect of speaking does not complete the mitzvah until one performs a certain act, for example one who says he wishes to donate money to tzedakah, has not fulfilled the mitzvah until he contributes the money. And if he does not fulfil his word it becomes a sin. An angel is created from every mitzvah, so the angel created from these words is created from potential and not execution, since he has not yet fulfilled the vow. Therefore, this angel created from speech waits with longing for the actual fulfillment of the mitzvah so he too will achieve completion and be transformed from potential to deed. This is the meaning of (Tosefta Chulin 2:5), 'It is better not to vow than to vow and not fulfil.' Therefore, if a person does vow he must fulfil it without delay."

These words can be taken as a lesson to understand the severity of speaking in the middle of praying. Uttering the words of the prayers is a mitzvah through which an angel is created. This angel sings praises to the Creator and creates a crown of praises from every letter. When man prays with the appropriate concentration, his angel is complete and the praises he offers to Hashem are fitting. But when a person speaks in the middle of his prayers, the angel created is a fragmented angel – just like his prayers, which are fragmented and interrupted with futile words. This is not fitting or respectable for Hashem.

Imagine someone who arrives at the king's palace, wishing to praise and thank him. But while praising the king, he presents him with a defective gift. The king will certainly grow angry and tell him it would have been better had he stayed home and not brought anything to the king.

This is what Hashem says to that person whose prayer is fragmented. In place of thanking and praising My name, you curse and degrade Me. It is preferable for you to stay home and not come to the Beit Knesset to create defective angels with your prayers, which present a great indictment.

Chazal say (Moed Katan 16b), "A tzadik decrees and Hashem fulfills." Seemingly, however great the tzadik is, how can he decree something Hashem Himself did not declare? If Hashem did not lay down this decree, is it not a sign it is not His plan? So how can a tzadik force, so to speak, Hashem to fulfill his words? However, in light of the above, one can say that the tzadik has sanctified his speech to such an extent that he does not utter any futile words at all. His mouth becomes so holy to the extent that the Shechina speaks from his throat. Therefore, if a tzadik decrees it is not against Hashem's wish but on the contrary, his words are actually Hashem's desire, for it is the voice of the Shechina emerging from his mouth.

# A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA



## The Mitzvah of Tzedakah Requires Siyata d'Shmaya

When Bnei Yisrael returned from the war against Midian, they brought with them abundant spoil which they divided out between the tribes. Each one of us possesses a 'spoil' of financial resources which the Creator has deposited in our hands. And what do we do with it? Do we know how to direct our economic capacity to the correct places? If only this were so...

So that our money should go to the right places, we require *siyata d'Shmaya*, which intensifies to the extent with which we act honestly and use the money deposited with us in the correct way- for *tzedakah*, *chesed* and supporting Torah scholars. Not every person merits this Divine Assistance.

HaRav Ya'akov Moshe Spitzer *shlit"a*, who merited attending the Gaon and *tzadik* Rabbi Chaim Zeitchik *zt"l*, relates the following story: Once when the Gaon returned from an urgent trip to America, Rabbi Ya'akov noticed he was extremely pale and seemed weak and frightened. He was about to call the emergency medical services, but the *tzadik* calmed him down and said there is no need. "I will tell you what happened and why I am so distraught," he said.

"Several years ago, I received an urgent phone call from one of America's wealthiest Jews. He had come to Eretz Yisrael for several days and wanted to meet me urgently.

"At first I politely pushed off the invitation, for what do connection do I have with the rich of America? Even after begging me many times to kindly meet with him, I refused, explaining that other than the four *amot* of *halacha*, nothing else exists for me! But after clarifying that he was talking about an enormous contribution he wishes to donate to *tzedakah* and Torah institutions, I agreed to the invitation and set off for the luxurious hotel.

"When I arrived at the magnificent guest lounge, I realized to my surprise that this was a serious business meeting. Seated around the affluent American, who sat comfortably in an upholstered armchair, were about five shrewd lawyers who presented the deal.

"It turned out that this affluent businessman, who lived in one of America's largest cities, was as stingy as he was wealthy. Every time he was asked to donate to a certain charity, he

evaded the request, with the bizarre claim that he does not wish to get involved in dispute... He explained that since in the majority of cases there are parallel charity organizations for the same need, as is the way of the holy Jewish people, he found an 'excuse' and claimed that he stays away from giving charity so as not to support dispute!

"He was now growing older and reaching the end of his life, with no children to inherit his fortune. His heart began to pound in fear in wake of the awesome Day of Judgement, not even having anyone to recite *kaddish* after his passing. He therefore wished to speak to me, for he had heard I was honest, and convey his wish to donate a-l-l his capital to *tzedakah*!

"Okay!" I rejoiced, 'Divide out your property appropriately to Torah institutions. With these fantastic sums, you will certainly be able to establish and support several *Yeshivot* for many years! But I still don't understand, why am I needed here?'

"There is no way I am distributing my money to charity at this point!" the miserly man emphatically declared. 'As long as I am alive, I want all my wealth to remain with me. Only after one hundred and twenty years when I leave This World and no longer require the money, will my assets go to charity!'

"And so," he concluded, 'I invited you here to appoint you as my loyal trustee and apostrophe to distribute my fortune. You will distribute it to Torah institutions as you see fit! I have here the most intelligent lawyers who will write up a detailed will, appointing you as the exclusive trustee to transfer all my property to charity.' Well aware of the significance of the moment, the opportunity to distribute many millions to *tzedakah* and *chesed*, I attached my signature to the deed, together with that of the affluent benefactor and his lawyer.

"Several years passed and the news arrived that this wealthy man had passed away. I was urgently asked to take the next direct flight to America, to handle the distribution of the enormous fortune, as detailed in the will. As soon as I arrived, I went straight to the rich man's palatial home to settle the matter as per the wish of the deceased. But how astounded I was to find a gathering of eight priests from various churches and monasteries! Sitting together with them was the chief attorney, responsible for executing the will and overseeing the distribution of the capital according to the law.

"I was terrified to see these priests sitting and waiting for me. 'Why are they here?' I asked with heavy apprehension. The lawyer answered that as the sole trustee and exclusively responsible for distributing the capital, I was now required to carry out the distribution. 'I already know that!' I answered, 'That

is why I came here! But what connection do the Christian priests have to this occasion?'

"It is very simple,' explained the lawyer, 'these eight priests own eight different monasteries here around town, and they are included in the 'charity institutions' explicitly detailed in the will lying before us!'

"Impossible!' I cried out in anguish. 'The deceased was a loyal Jew! He explicitly specified that I distribute his wealth to Torah institutions, holy *Yeshivot*, and *tzedakah* and *chesed* organizations! What connection do these gentiles have with Jewish Torah and *tzedakah* institutions?'

"To my great consternation and pain, I discovered that the shrewd 'lawyer', who was a wicked gentile, cunningly inserted one word (!) in the will, enabling him to direct the massive fortune for the benefit of the Christian priests: 'Bible Institutions'. This can be understood as Torah institutions, but with legal craftiness the lawyer diverted the intent to Christian monasteries.

"I tried with all my might to change the difficult sentence. I claimed it was absolutely clear the rich Jew's intention was Jewish and not gentile institutions, but the shrewd lawyer produced a ready court order, for he had clarified the matter in advance. The court decreed that the entire fortune must be distributed among the different monasteries in town, so that not even one coin was left for the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*!

"I suffered great pain and heartache over the enormous loss for the holy *Yeshivot*, combined with the vast spiritual loss, since that unfortunate Jew did not merit performing the *mitzvah*. I simply fled from there straight back to my home in *Yerushalayim*.

"I am extremely distressed," concluded Rabbi Chaim to his faithful *talmid*. "My heart is filled with pain that the Jew did not merit the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah* in the slightest! I had begged him to distribute his fortune to *tzedakah* in his lifetime, but he insisted on keeping the money at his side until he dies! And so he lost the enormous merit of supporting Torah institutions that could have afforded him exceptional reward and eternal life, as the verse testifies (*Mishlei* 3:18), 'It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy!'

Rabbi Chaim added, why did this wealthy man not merit fulfilling this wonderful *mitzvah*? Because he stayed away from *tzedakah* all his life and excused this with the pretext of distancing himself from dispute. Only just before his death did he want to gain from a charitable act. But Heaven prevented this and all his money went to gentile priests and monks. And so he lost the precious *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*!