

Bereshit

October 2nd 2021
26th of Tishri 5782

923



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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Man's Obligation to Do Hashem's Will

"And Hashem G-d formed the man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living being" (Bereishit 2:7)

The Torah writes the sequence of the creation of the entire world in the first chapter including a mention of the creation of man, and later in the second chapter the Torah writes about it in more detail. One can ask why this is so, why is the creation of man written separately from the rest of the creation? Additionally, the Torah writes at length about the creation of Adam, his purpose, his life in the Garden of Eden and his subsequent sin. Why is all this written in so much detail, whereas the rest of creation is discussed quite briefly?

We can explain this with the following principle: Humans are the crown of creation, the ultimate reason for the creation of the world and everything contained within. For this reason, the Torah did not want to start with Adam's sin – how he didn't listen to G-d but rather ate from the Tree of Knowledge, immediately after his creation. Rather, the Torah begins with the virtues of man, taking note of the fact that G-d Himself blew life into humans (Bereishit 2:7), and as Chazal tell us (Zohar HaKadosh vol. 1 pg. 27a), the One who blew [life] blew from Himself. (He infused Adam/man with G-dliness).

And since the Torah mentions the qualities of man, it continues to mention other admirable works of creation, namely the benefits of the holiness of Shabbat and upholding its' laws. Shabbat is uniquely beneficial in that it is the most desirable day of the week and in addition, through it all the rest of the week is blessed, as the Zohar says (vol. 2 pg. 88a), "Through it the

rest of the week receives its sustenance."

Only then does the Torah continue and describe at length the uniqueness of Adam as the pinnacle of creation and how Adam did not obey Hashem's instruction; he sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge and was punished by being thrown out of the Garden of Eden. A revolving sword was placed at the entrance in order to guard the way to the Tree of Life. Only regarding man does the Torah write at such length, because he is the highlight of creation.

This shows us how much pleasure Hashem has from those who study Torah and the pleasure He has from these few verses that mention the creation of the universe and of man, for whom the entire world was created. Therefore, the Torah precedes the sin with all the additional verses about creation of man, the world and Shabbat, which form a division between the creation of man and his sin. We see from here the importance of giving pleasure to G-d through our good deeds, studying Torah and performing the mitzvot. In this way we will merit resembling our holy forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, and also be part of the crown of creation.

The Midrash (Bereishit Raba 12:9) tells us that the entire universe was created in the merit of our forefather Avraham, as the verse says (Bereishit 2:4), "These are the products of the heaven and the earth when they were created." The word בְּהִבְרָאם – when they were created can be re-arranged to spell אֲבִרָהָם – Avraham, because in the merit of Avraham Avinu the world was created. It seems that the Torah begins in praise of the creation and not with its disgrace, in the merit of Avraham Avinu.

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Walking in their Ways

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

Which Expert Created Man's Complex Body?

Someone who wishes to raise well-behaved children must behave in a refined manner, for personal example is the best education.

One may think he can educate his children by imposing his will on them. Indeed, when they are young, he can force them to obey him but this is not 'chinuch'. It is simply forcing his authority on their will. As his children grow up and become independent, they will no longer be willing to fulfil their father's wish and will turn their backs on him. Correct chinuch is achieved by explaining how to behave and at the same time showing a positive example. A person who instills in his children the importance of good middot while he himself behaves in the opposite way, causes them to disregard his chinuch. They will quickly turn their backs on him and adopt foreign ways.

A father and son once came to see me; the father told me his son has many questions about faith he cannot answer. I told the boy he can ask me his questions. "Rabbi David," he began, "I want you to prove to me there is a G-d in heaven".

I asked the boy if he owns a watch and he replied by showing me the new watch he had received for a Bar Mitzvah gift. I acted as if I was very impressed with his new watch and then said that apparently, such a sophisticated watch came into being by itself. He looked at me, perplexed. "By itself???" I acted as if I didn't understand what he was surprised about and said, "Isn't that so? Who, in your opinion, created such a sophisticated watch?" The gifted boy replied that there are people who are experts at designing watches and they are certainly the ones who created the machinery that fashions these watches.

Realizing he was a clever child, I said, "And who, in your opinion, made the person who is wearing this sophisticated watch? Your body is immeasurably more sophisticated than the watch on your hand. Certainly Someone incomparably proficient created this complex body. Do you know Who this is?" Even though he was a young boy, he understood what I meant. He lowered his eyes and replied that he understands, indeed it is Hashem who created the entire world, himself included.

I smiled and said good-bye to the agreeable child and then turned to the father. I saw he was happy with the way I had answered his son, but I felt I had to reprimand him: "If your child is asking this kind of question, it is your fault. It appears that what he hears from you are not words of faith in Hashem. If he would hear this kind of speech from a young age, if you would instill in his heart, concerning every big and small occurrence, that everything emanates from Hashem, he would not need proof of a G-d – because words that come from the heart enter the heart."

The Haftarah

"Thus said the G-d, Hashem, Who created the heavens and stretched them forth" (Yeshaya 42)

The connection to the Parshah: The prophecy of Yeshaya mentions the creation of heaven and earth and all that it contains, as is detailed at length in the Parshah.

The Path of the Upright

Rabbi Akiva pointed out a fundamental Torah principle: "You shall love your fellow as yourself." The Tanna Debai Eliyahu tells us that Hashem told the Jewish Nation, "My beloved children, have I ever asked of you anything that is too difficult? What am I asking of you? That you should love each other, respect each other, and fear each other."

How do we actualize this?

The Rambam (Hilchot De'ot) writes, "Every person is commanded to love every single Jewish person exactly as he loves himself, as it says, 'You shall love your fellow as yourself.' Therefore, one should praise him and be careful with his money just as one is careful with his own money and wants his own honor upheld. And one who takes pleasure in someone else's disgrace forfeits his portion in the World-To-Come."



In Our Father's Path

Strengthening Shabbat Observance Begins at Home

The creation was completed on the seventh day when the Creator rested from all His work and commanded us to uphold the Shabbat that bears witness to the creation. Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein shlita cries out the cry of Shabbat and teaches us that every single Jew must uphold and strengthen the observance of Shabbat in his home. He asserts that the first improvement must be in the time we welcome the Shabbat.

He brings the following story in his sefer *Borchi Nafshi*:

A famous lawyer came to me bemoaning an act of Shabbat desecration that he was personally involved in. To my great astonishment, he was in tears, behavior totally atypical for a lawyer. Everyone knows that lawyers are usually cold and unfeeling and certainly do not break down in tears.

The lawyer explained:

"On Friday I travelled by car from Bnei Brak to Jerusalem and when I approached Motza, the motor stalled and wouldn't restart. It was one-thirty in the afternoon, with plenty of time until Shabbat.

"My insurance covered towing my car to my home so I called the company, gave them my details and asked them to bring my car to my address. They took down the details and assured me they would take care of it as soon as possible. I stressed that I am an observant Jew and would like them to return my car before the commencement of Shabbat. The towing company promised me this would not be a problem.

"I made my way home by taxi and waited impatiently for my car to arrive. To my great fear and embarrassment, Shabbat arrived but the car was nowhere in sight. To my great consternation, at ten o'clock on Shabbat eve, all my neighbors heard the tow-truck lowering the car of the religious lawyer."

The lawyer burst into bitter tears at the reminder of this Shabbat desecration. He pointed out that he lives in a neighborhood inhabited by both religious and not yet religious residents, on the border between Bnei Brak and Ramat Gan, and this created an extreme desecration of G-d's Name. (In a religious neighborhood they would understand that a mistake took place.) "I am so traumatized by the event," he concluded, "I can no longer look at my car! I was certain that if the towing company assured me they would bring the car before Shabbat, they would honor their word. If I would have had even the slightest doubt, I would have left it there at the roadside and fetched it myself Motza'ei Shabbat, even at the risk of the car being stolen."

The troubled lawyer asked how he could fix this infraction. I told him to write a letter to all the religious newspapers and publicize the incident, concluding with a warning to the public that should they be involved in a similar situation, they should not copy his mistake. Rather, they should leave the car at the side of the road and order the tow-truck only after Shabbat ends.

The lesson we can take from the story is that a Jew who wants to influence others to improve their Shabbat observance must first of all strengthen the Shabbat observance in his own home and not do anything that may cause Shabbat desecration.



Pearls of the Parsha

Hope is Not Lost

"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me what I ate from the tree" (Bereishit 3:12)

The Midrash Rabba quotes Rav Abba bar Kahana who explained: "It does not say and 'I ate' but 'I will eat'. I ate and will eat again." (In Hebrew the verb is written in the future tense although Adam is relating to an event in the past)

The Chidushei Harim explains that Hashem asked Adam, what was going through your mind when you ate? Were you in a mind frame of "I will sin and repent", of one who is not given the opportunity to repent?

Adam answered: This was not my intention. I ate and will eat again. This is what I had in mind and therefore I still have hope (to repent).

No Blessing for the Sense of Hearing

"To Adam He said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife" (Bereishit 3:17)

The sefer 'Machaze Avraham' brings this verse as a basis for why, in the morning blessings, we do not recite a blessing for the sense of hearing, just like we bless 'Who gives sight to the blind' for the sense of sight. Through Adam Harishon listening to his wife, he brought damage to the entire world and since the damage was a result of the power of hearing, it is not fitting to bless for it.

... The Sabbatical Year ...

1. The prohibition of sefichin does not apply to flowers, fragrant or otherwise.

2. Likewise, there is no prohibition of sefichin on vegetables that started sprouting during the sixth year and completed their growth during the Shemittah year, even though their main growing and harvesting took place during Shemittah. All Shemittah laws apply, since with vegetables the law is determined according to the time of picking rather than the time of planting.

The Rambam is of the opinion that the prohibition of sefichin applies to all vegetables picked during Shemittah, even if they completed their growth in the sixth year. The general consensus is not to follow this opinion; however one who is stringent will be blessed. It is preferable to purchase vegetables that started growing before the Shemittah year and thereby support the Jewish farmers who uphold the laws of Shemittah.

3. Sefichin produce must be uprooted and left to rot. This only applies if it was planted during the Shemittah year or it looks suspect (e.g. when a significant amount of time has passed since the start of the Shemittah year). When uprooting, it should be done differently than regular harvesting by uprooting the entire plant with its roots, rather than just removing the vegetable.

4. We mentioned that vegetables planted and harvested during Shemittah are forbidden because of sefichin. It should be noted that this is a permanent prohibition which still applies even after new produce has grown in the year following Shemittah.

Vegetables that grew in Shemittah and were harvested during the eighth year may not be eaten. Instead of picking them in the normal manner, they must be plowed over and left for animals to graze freely. These vegetables are only forbidden for the amount of time it takes for that species to grow had it been planted at the start of the eighth year. At that point, even vegetables that were picked earlier – during the eighth year – become permitted. By the time Chanukah arrives, all vegetables are permitted, provided they were picked in the eighth year.

5. When does the prohibition of sefichin terminate?

Until the amount of time it takes for a new crop planted in the eighth year to grow, each species at its own time. When no information is available, everything becomes permitted after Chanukah of the eighth year. Information is usually available from the Kashruth authorities. Root vegetables and others that survive long-term storage, (e.g. potatoes, onions and garlic) could remain prohibited for many months into the eighth year.

6. While one may not use sefichin and plant them after the Shemittah year, if one did so the produce is permitted.

Treasures

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



"But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die."
(Bereishit 2:17)

Hashem told Adam Harishon if he eats from the Tree of Knowledge he will be punished with death. One can ask, how could Hashem punish Adam so severely? This will leave the world bereft of people and then who will observe Shabbat! Who will study Torah and perform all the mitzvot? Was the sin of Adam so great that because of it the entire world had to be destroyed? Additionally, Chazal (Pesachim 54a) tell us that the essence of repentance existed even before the creation of the world, but if Adam is immediately put to death, how would he be able to repent?

We can answer all of this by explaining that the punishment imposed on Adam was not a physical death but a spiritual death. Hashem used such strong wording because He wanted to convey the idea that if a human sins, G-d considers him a wicked person and the wicked are considered dead (Berachot 18b). It is this kind of death G-d was referring to. With this understanding we can answer the question. Torah study, Shabbat and mitzvah performance will never cease, rather the sinner will be considered as dead until one of his descendants will be righteous and uphold the world.

On that first Shabbat, Adam did in fact do a genuine and thorough teshuva. There is a deep connection between repentance and Shabbat: On a regular weekday a singular light shines, whereas on Shabbat there is a concentration of all the lights. In addition to this unique 'Shabbat-light', there is a unique, powerful light, far beyond our comprehension, known as 'The light of the seven days'. Adam was able to sense this; therefore he dedicated the day of Shabbat for sincere repentance and thereby infused all future generations with this power. Anecdotally, we see a connection between these two concepts – Shabbat and repentance – from the way they are spelled: שַׁבָּת - תְּשׁוּבָה. Both words are comprised of the same letters, although repentance has an extra 'vav'. We can suggest that since the 'vav' has a numerical value of six, it represents the sixth day of creation, the day man was created. And Man was given Shabbat as an opportunity for repentance.



THE SURVIVORS OF THE GREAT ASSEMBLY

The hilula of the holy Tanna, Shimon Hatzaddik, the very last surviving member of the Anshei Knesset Hagedolah (Men of the Great Assembly), is this week. On this day, many flock to pray at his gravesite in Northern Jerusalem. Some also have the custom of performing the chalaka ceremony (first haircut for a three-year old boy) at his gravesite on the hilula.

The Tanna Shimon Hatzaddik was taught Torah by Ezra HaSofer. He himself transmitted this Torah to Antigonus of Socho. The Gemara mentions that he passed away on the twenty-ninth of Tishrei, seven days after Sukkot.

The Gemara (Yoma 39b) relates, "The Rabbis taught: The year Shimon Hatzaddik passed away, he told his colleagues he expected to die during that year. They asked him how he knew. He told them that every Yom Kippur he would encounter a wise, elderly man dressed in white garments who would accompany him into the Holy of Holies and out again. This year however, the elderly man was dressed in ominous black clothing. He entered the Holy of Holies together with me but did not leave with me." And it was as the tzaddik foretold: seven days after Sukkot, Shimon Hatzaddik fell ill and succumbed to his illness.

Chazal recount numerous wondrous miracles that occurred in the Beit Hamikdash while Shimon Hatzaddik was alive.

For the first forty years that Shimon Hatzaddik acted as Kohen Gadol, the sheep standing on his right side would always be drawn in the lottery, as the one chosen to have its blood sprinkled next to the Holy Ark inside the Holy of Holies, whilst the one on his left was chosen as the Azazel). Thereafter, sometimes the right one and sometimes the left one came out in the lottery.

So too with regards to the red string; during his lifetime it would always turn white, denoting G-d's forgiveness of the sins of the Jewish nation. Later on this did not always occur.

The western flame of the Menorah would

remain alight, symbolic of G-d's presence amongst the Jews. Additionally, the fire on the Altar was so powerful it would not require any wood to fuel it, besides the two logs ceremoniously placed there twice daily, for the sake of observing the mitzvah.

There was exceptional blessing in the Omer sacrifice (offered on Passover), the Two Loaves (offered on Shavuot) and the Twelve Loaves placed on the Table in the Kodesh section of the Beit Hamikdash. The Kohanim would receive an olive-sized piece that would satisfy them; some were even able to leave some over.

During the lifetime of Shimon Hatzaddik, when the Kohanim would bless the Jewish nation, they would pronounce one of G-d's specific Holy Names; after his passing they ceased to do so.

Two Red Heifers were burned in his days (in order to use the ashes for the purification process) and Shimon Hatzaddik arranged for a new ramp to be built for each occasion, in order to publicize the importance of the mitzvah of burning the Heifer Cow.

Prostrating to Shimon Hatzaddik

The Gemara (Yoma 69a) tells us that the Cutithes tried to convince Alexander Mukden to destroy the Beit Hamikdash forty years after it was rebuilt, and he granted them permission to do so.

When Shimon Hatzaddik heard this terrible news, he changed into his high-priestly clothes and went out with the elders, bearing torches. When Alexander Mukden saw Shimon Hatzaddik, he left his carriage and bowed down to him. His entourage asked him, how could he, the powerful and mighty king, bow down to this Jew? Alexander explained, it is his form I see leading me into battle and causing me to be victorious. Alexander then asked Shimon Hatzaddik "Why did you come?" In reply he pleaded, "Could it be that the House in which we pray for your success, should be given over to these people to be destroyed?" He asked, "Who are 'these people'?" They responded, "These Cutithes who are standing here." Alexander told the Jewish commission, "Take them and do to them as you wish." The Jewish representatives immediately grabbed the Cutithes, bored holes through their heels, tied them to horses' tails and had the horses drag them back home to Mount Gerizim. When they arrived, the Jews had the entire moun-

tain plowed and then planted beans there, exactly as the Cutithes wanted to do to the House of G-d. Through Shimon Hatzaddik, the Beit Hamikdash was saved. That day, the twenty-fifth of Tevet, was designated as a Yom Tov.

In the Midrash of Rav David the Nagid it is related that Alexander Mukden requested that his image be positioned in the Beit Hamikdash in gratitude for his part in saving the Beit Hamikdash. Shimon Hatzaddik gently explained that it was forbidden to have any form or image whatsoever in the Beit Hamikdash (this obviously excludes the Cherubim on the Ark). As compensation, Shimon Hatzaddik promised that all boys born to the Kohanim that year will be named Alexander in his honor. Alexander accepted the honor and that is how the name Alexander became a conventional Jewish name.

His Gravesite

Tradition has it that the burial place of Shimon Hatzaddik is in the North-Eastern section of Jerusalem, near the road that leads from the Old City towards Mount Scopus (between Wadi Juz and Shiach Juach), in a small valley positioned at the source of the Kedron stream.

His gravesite is considered to be a holy place, auspicious for meriting salvation for all kinds of troubles. Throughout the years and even today, people take their three year olds to this site for their first haircut.

The Miracle of the Oil

Rabbi Moshe Reisher, in his sefer Sha'arei Yerushalayim, writes about the extraordinary miracle that took place at the cave of Shimon Hatzaddik one Shabbat eve.

Every Friday afternoon, two men had the honor of kindling the ner tamid in the cave where he is buried. One week there was insufficient oil; they only found two units rather than the usual seven needed to keep the flame alight. Being that it was so close to Shabbat, they had no choice but to kindle the amount they had. That Shabbat, to their amazement, a miracle occurred – the ner tamid remained alight the entire Shabbat!

Rabbi Moshe Reisher points out that these men gave testimony in front of the Jerusalem Beit Din, swearing to its accuracy without any exaggeration!