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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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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



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Hilula

30 Kislev - Rabbi Dov Oppenheim, Av Beit Din of Dreznik

1 Tevet - Rabbi Yair Chaim Bachrach, author of Chavot Yair

2 Tevet - Rabbi Ya'akov Ibn Tzur, author of Mishpat U'tzedakah B'Ya'akov

3 Tevet - Rabbi Avigdor Ezriel, author of Zimrat Ha'aretz

4 Tevet - Rabbi Chaim Shaul Dwek HaKohen, author of Eiphah Shleimah

5 Tevet - Rabbi Yehoshua HaLevi Horowitz

6 Tevet - Rabbi Yerachmiel Tzvi Yehuda Rabinowitz, Admor of Biala-Peshischa

Yosef's Intention: Unity among the Brothers

"Yosef saw Binyamin with them; so he said... 'Bring the men into the house. Have meat slaughtered, and prepare it, for with me will these men dine at noon.'" [Bereishit 43:16].

Chazal [Tanchuma, Nasso 28] expound on this verse: "Rabbi Yochanan said it was Shabbat, as it says [בנהו], and prepare it,' and 'prepare' refers to Shabbat, as it says [Shemot 16:5], 'And it shall be that on the sixth day when they prepare...' Hashem said to him (Yosef), 'You observed Shabbat even before it was given, I promise that your grandson will offer a sacrifice on Shabbat, as it says [Bamidbar 7:48], 'On the seventh day, the leader of the children of Ephraim.'"

On Friday Yosef invited the brothers to eat the Shabbat meal together with him. Rabbeinu Bachya, the Rokeach, and the Tosafot Hashalem all share the opinion that the meal took place on Shabbat afternoon.

The author of Oznayim L'Torah writes: The verse says [Bereishit 44:3], "The day dawned and the men were sent off, they and their donkeys." Chazal expound on this [Pesachim 2a], "A person should always arrive (at his destination) in the daytime and depart (on a journey) in the daytime," and therefore the men were sent off in the morning. From the wording of the verse it is clear that only in the morning were they given permission to go, for otherwise the verse would read, "The day dawned and the men went," instead of "the men were sent off." Why in fact were they not given permission to go already at night?

The verse says [Bereishit 43:34], "They drank and became intoxicated with him." Since the brothers became intoxicated, had they left in the night they could have excused themselves by saying we were drunk and therefore not responsible for the actions of our youngest brother, who also acted in his drunken state (when taking the goblet). This could be the reason why Yosef instructed that they should be retained for the night and not allowed to leave before daybreak. Chazal say that sleep removes the influence of wine, so they would sleep off their drunkenness during the night and then have no excuse for their actions.

The commentaries ask another question about this episode: how did Yosef release the brothers and send them off on Shabbat when this involved Shabbat desecration? Yosef observed Shabbat

even before we were given this commandment, as is clear from the above Midrash (based on the words "have meat slaughtered and prepare it"). So how did he allow the brothers to desecrate Shabbat?

Several commentaries explain that it involved a matter of life and death. All the brothers were now in Egypt, while Ya'akov Avinu, their elderly father, remained alone in Canaan. Not only that, but he was left without food (he sent them down to Egypt to obtain food). And a matter of life and death overrides Shabbat observance. This is how Yosef could allow the brothers to return to Canaan, even on Shabbat.

However, although we can understand that sending them back to Canaan was a matter of life and death, making them return to Egypt on Shabbat (when the goblet is discovered) is clearly desecrating Shabbat.

It seems we can answer that establishing unity between the brothers was a matter as important as life and death. Yosef Hatzaddik now felt the need to challenge his brothers and see to what extent they are prepared to show self-sacrifice for their brother Binyamin. Therefore he told his men to hide his silver goblet, with which he 'divined', in Binyamin's sack. Accusing them of theft, with the suspicion falling on Binyamin, would be a test to see if they are willing to sacrifice themselves for their brother.

There is no greater 'life and death matter' than this – if there is a lack of unity between the tribes, or among Bnei Yisrael. When one of the tribes is not following Hashem's path, this blemishes the entirety of creation. Ya'akov was concerned that he would lose his share in the World to Come if one of his children dies in his lifetime [see Tanchuma, Vayigash 9]. Since this could also refer to spiritual death, a lack of unity among Bnei Yisrael is a matter of life and death.

Now we understand why Yosef Hatzaddik considered it a matter of life and death which would warrant sending them away on Shabbat. He wanted to check whether their hearts were unified and they had repented. It was of utmost importance to Yosef that his father Ya'akov merit a share in the World to Come, and not lose it, G-d forbid, on account of division among his children.



Walking in their Ways

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

Documenting Heartfelt Prayer

I once stayed at a certain hotel. Before leaving, as I was packing up my things, I noticed I had lost an important document. I looked for it everywhere but could not find it.

Since I saw that by natural means I could not find it, I lifted my eyes heavenward and asked Hashem to help me find it. Then I looked again in every crack and crevice, but it did not turn up.

I turned to Hashem in supplication once again, "Master of the World, if I am destined to lose this valuable document, I accept this decree with love. But the loss is not mine alone. It is Your loss as well, since I need it for the sake of supporting Torah."

I was still speaking to Hashem when my phone rang. An acquaintance was on the line and he said, "Honored Rav, I lost something extremely valuable. I cannot find it anywhere. Maybe the Rav has a good idea to help me find it?"

Suddenly, like a thunderbolt, I was hit by inspiration. "Did you look on top of the cabinet?" I asked.

He did not have a chance to answer before I remembered that I myself had placed the elusive document exactly there – above the cabinet in my hotel room. Hashem sent me the phone call to help me recollect where I had placed the all-important document.

I am certain that the prayer that I uttered about the document was what enabled me to ultimately find it. We must learn from this incident that Hashem longs for prayer which comes from the depths of one's heart. This type of prayer never goes unanswered.

The Haftarah

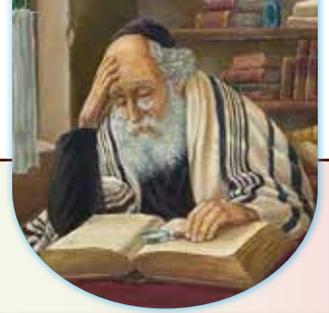
"Sing and be glad" [Zecharya 2-4]

The connection to the Parshah: The Haftarah mentions the lights and the Menorah that Zecharya saw in a prophecy, a topic that corresponds to this time of the year when we kindle the Chanukah lights.

The Path of the Upright

Every person must refrain from committing acts that arouse suspicion that he is transgressing G-d's will. We must take others into account, as it says, "you shall be vindicated from Hashem and from Yisrael." (We find that Chazal forbade certain things so as not to cause mar'it ayin – false suspicion).

Similarly, one may not relate or publicize sins he committed. If one suspects someone else of committing a sin, he should announce his intentions so as not to be seen in a suspicious light.



In Our Father's Path

The Sick Child Asked to Meet Trump

The word Chanukah is derived from the word chinuch. This chag symbolizes the transmission of Jewish values and noble middot to our children. The following moving story, as recounted in Apiryon Shlomo, demonstrates how a proper Torah education imparts the highest values of Jewish ethics, and the extent to which mutual responsibility thrives in the compassionate heart of every Jew, at every age and in every situation.

Harav Friedman, an America gabbai tzedaka, had a nine-year-old child who was sick with a terminal condition. There is a non-Jewish organization in America called 'Fulfill a Wish', whose goal is to fulfill the wish of terminally ill children, up to \$10,000. Some choose to go to Disneyland, some want to fly over the Niagara Falls, and others want to visit the wilds of Africa.

On Chanukah 5778, the organization's representatives visited this young Jewish child in the hospital, and were astonished to hear his wish: "I want to meet the American President, Donald Trump!" Since the child's condition was critical and he had to be connected to various machines, it was very difficult to release him from hospital. And to bring the president to the hospital was twice as hard... Besides, just the security and making arrangements would already cost more than \$10,000...

But the child insisted: "I must ask the President something." This request reached the head of the organization, who called the child and offered a compromise: "Write a letter detailing your request and we will send it to the president. I will personally guarantee that within a week your letter will be on his table."

And so the nine-year-old wrote: "Dear president Donald Trump, I admire you greatly – particularly your efforts on behalf of the Jewish people. You should know, Mr. President, that I do not know when my end will come. It could be that when you read my letter I will no longer be alive. But it disturbs me greatly that there is a Jew named Rubashkin who has been tried and falsely charged and sentenced to twenty-seven years' imprisonment. He has a wife and seven children, including a sick child. As I lie on my hospital bed, my thoughts are preoccupied with the children longing for their father's return. With tears in my eyes I beg you to have compassion and grant him pardon."

The letter was placed on the president's table two days before Chanukah. Trump read the letter and tears welled up in his eyes. He called his daughter with a request: "Read me the letter; I am not capable of doing so." In the last 100 years no president in the first year of his presidency had pardoned or lightened the sentence of a prisoner. But the letter from this Jewish child overwhelmed the heart of this non-Jewish leader.

The power of a Jewish child! What would a non-Jewish child have asked for? As many pleasures as possible! But the single pleasure of this Jewish child was to help a fellow Jew from a different state that he had never met...

"This nation I created for Me!"



The Sabbatical Year

1. One may cut branches of a tree during Shemittah if this does not benefit the tree. Therefore it is permissible to cut branches to be used as s'chach (special roof covering for the sukkah). But if the tree has started bearing fruit, one may not cut off those branches, because this is considered as wasting the fruit.

2. One may cut flowers during Shemittah to be used for adorning the house. If picking the flowers causes more flowers to blossom (forbidden due to pruning), then as long as one does not intend to enhance growth, he should pick them in a manner different from the norm (shinui). For example, he should cut the stalk at the top third and not in the middle, since this does not encourage further growth. It is preferable not to use a special instrument to cut the flowers.

3. A private individual who grows flowers in his garden may pick them during Shemittah to adorn his house, if he does not intend to sell them or enhance growth.

4. One who transgressed a Torah prohibition by pruning his field during Shemittah is nevertheless not penalized by being forbidden to sow his field at the end of the Shemittah year.

5. Concerning aravot, in other years it is customary to cut the tree on Tu B'Av and leave no leaves at all. The tree is then watered twice a week so it will produce many fine aravot in time for Sukkot. Some also burn the hadasim bush so it should produce hadasim meshulashim (having three leaves at each level, making it fit for the mitzvah of arba minim). Even though these acts may not be done during Shemittah, nevertheless b'diavad (after the fact) if one did so, he may use the hadasim and aravot for the mitzvah of arba minim on Sukkot.

6. Some use the leaves of the gath plant, transplanted to Eretz Yisrael from Yemen, for chewing. Its leaves are cut in a certain way which causes them to sprout again two weeks later. Some maintain that one may not cut the leaves in this way during Shemittah, but we follow the lenient opinion. L'chatchila (ideally) it is preferable to cut them in a different manner from normal. For example, if one usually cuts the top third, he should cut from the middle, etc. We are also lenient concerning kedushat shevi'it, since it is not something used by everyone.

For any questions in practical application of these halachot, please consult a rabbinical authority.

Treasures

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



The Value of Hakarat Hatov to Man and Hashem

"He returned to them and spoke to them; he took Shimon from them and imprisoned him before their eyes" [Bereishit 42:24].

When Yosef took Shimon, separated him from the brothers and imprisoned him, the brothers should have immediately protested. How did they allow the viceroy of Egypt to imprison their brother? Besides, this incident took place after Yosef accused them of being spies and coming to see the land's vulnerability, which caused them great embarrassment. So how did they allow this? Where was their courage? They could easily have destroyed the entire land of Egypt with their great strength, yet they remained quiet and returned to Canaan without their brother Shimon.

I would like to suggest that this is a lesson on the importance of hakarat hatov (showing appreciation) to every person, even someone who is not Jewish. The sons of Ya'akov suffered greatly from the severe famine. When there were no more provisions in Canaan they went down to Egypt to purchase food, and Yosef (although they did not recognize him) gave them as much food as they asked for. Since they were grateful to him for the food he provided, they felt unable to do anything against him. They therefore restrained themselves and did not fight with Yosef for Shimon's release, and Shimon too did not protest that he was taken captive.

At first they thought it was a matter of life and death, since the viceroy imprisoned their brother and later also asked them to bring their youngest brother, Binyamin, from Eretz Yisrael. As long as they were unsure what the viceroy had in mind, whether he meant their good or, G-d forbid, had negative intentions, they restrained themselves. But afterwards, as soon as they saw that Yosef accused Binyamin of theft, then they did not give in one bit and decided to fight him to the bitter end. Hakarat hatov was no longer applicable for they were obligated to return with Binyamin to their father Ya'akov. Otherwise this would jeopardize his life, for his soul was tightly attached to his youngest son.

May the Memory of a Tzaddik be for a Blessing



The Gaon Rabbi Ya'akov Shaul Katzin zt"l

The distinguished Katzin family trace their roots to the era of the holy Rabbi Yosef Caro zy"a. Due to the atrocities of the Spanish inquisition, the head of the family, Sénior Shlomo Katzin, left his hometown and after much wandering settled in Aram Tzova (Aleppo, Syria), the city of sages and writers. He fathered many generations of pious rabbis and great Torah scholars, as Chazal say: "Torah returns to its host."

The great gaon and pious Kabbalist, Rabbi Ya'akov Shaul Katzin zt"l, who worked tirelessly on behalf of Torah, was born and raised in Yerushalayim, and eventually served as Chief Rabbi of Sha'arei Tzion, the holy community of Aram Tzova immigrants who settled in New York.

He began his education under the gaon Rabbi Refael Shlomo Laniado zt"l in the Ohel Moed yeshiva established for the Syrian community. Later on, with the establishment of the Porat Yosef yeshiva in 5683, he once again studied under Rabbi Refael who served as Rosh Yeshiva there.

The First World War, which came to an end during that time, left its mark on the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael in general, and on the residents of Yerushalayim in particular. The starving people tried to satisfy their hunger with bread baked from 'durah', which in normal times served as chicken feed, and also with orange peels they picked up from here and there. Those who perished from hunger outnumbered those who perished from the 'sword'. If this wasn't

enough, they were hit by terrible diseases and epidemics that were difficult to withstand, in particular the typhus disease, from which Rabbi Ya'akov's parents perished.

As a result of the intolerable food conditions that Rabbi Ya'akov consumed, he was diagnosed with a stomach ulcer, as he himself testifies in his autobiography:

"To my great dismay, I was affected by the Attribute of Judgement and a dreadful calamity in the form of a terrible ulcer, caused me untold suffering and pain... From the year 5680, I suffered enormous pain day and night. I was forbidden to eat anything besides milk, soup, and light foods, just enough to sustain me.

"The only solution was to operate. I was the first patient to undergo an operation in the Sha'arei Tzedek General Hospital, performed by the famous, righteous doctor, Dr. M. Wallach, may his name be blessed. From then on, the pain abated but the disease still raged and my strength and body weakened. I was pale and thin, anxiously awaiting the salvation of Hashem."

And yet, Rabbi Ya'akov testifies: "Despite the privation and suffering, I eagerly engaged in the study of gemara together with the interpretations of Rashi and Tosafot, and upheld all the mitzvot."

When the rabbis of the Porat Yosef yeshiva recognized Rabbi Ya'akov's prominence, they appointed him as one of the rabbis teaching classes. He taught his talmidim how to study gemara with Rashi and Tosafot, together with the commentaries of the Rishonim and Acharonim.

In front of a spellbound audience, Rabbi Ya'akov delivered a daily Kabbalah shiur to the scholars of Yeshivat Oz V'Hadar. This yeshiva was established next to the Porat Yosef yeshiva, as per the will of the donor, the wealthy Yosef Avraham Shalom. Rabbi Ya'akov considered it a 'miracle' that he, a young 25-year-old, taught Kabbalah to those

who were much older and more distinguished than him. Together they rose to lofty levels. The 'fruits' enjoyed in This World amounted to a salary of five pounds a month, the standard stipend for all of the yeshiva's students, and an additional two pounds for the Oz V'Hadar scholars, to encourage those who studied Kabbalah.

Rabbi Ya'akov's fame spread as an exceptional talmid chacham who had the ability to render decisions in all parts of Torah and the entire Shulchan Aruch.

As a member of the Beit Din Hagadol of the Sephardic community in Yerushalayim, Rabbi Ya'akov was required to deal with complicated issues of Gittin and Kiddushin and find solutions for many agunot, along with current issues and the needs of the general public. His ruling was always pronounced in his pleasant manner after a remarkable analysis of the facts. He documented the rulings of the beit din, and with his youthful spirit brought exemplary order to the work of the beit din, providing an appropriate response to each petition presented to them.

He was also famous for his philanthropy and used his influence for the benefit of Torah institutions in Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora. He continually lectured on the importance of giving charity and the great virtue of supporting Torah – "It is a tree of life for those who support it; its supporters are praiseworthy." He acted as he preached and when a messenger of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Ezra Atiah zt"l, arrived on behalf of the Porat Yosef yeshiva, he donated his monthly salary. This act made a big impression on everyone present and increased their regard for the mitzvah of giving charity immeasurably. He also established the 'Magen Yisrael' organization on behalf of the emissaries who travelled to New York to raise funds. He was famous for his many acts of charity from which thousands benefited, including many orphans, widows and other needy people.