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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

7 Tevet – Rabbi Moshe David Vali, a talmid of the Ramchal

8 Tevet – Rabbi Yechezkel Holtzshtock, the Admor of Ostrovitz

9 Tevet – Rabbi Yeshua Basis, author of Avnei Tzedek

10 Tevet – Rabbi Natan of Breslov

11 Tevet – Rabbi Shlomo son of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, author of Gilyon Maharsha

12 Tevet – Rabbi Moshe Margaliyot, author of Pnei Moshe on the Yerushalmi

13 Tevet – Rabbi Ezra Dangor, the Chacham Bashi of Bavel

The Powerful Influence of Tzaddikim

"And it shall be, when Pharaoh summons you and says, 'What is your occupation?' then you are to say, 'Your servants have been cattlemen from our youth till now...' so that you may be able to settle in the region of Goshen, since all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians" [Bereishit 46:33-34].

The Midrash writes: "Why does the verse say [Bereishit 47:2], 'From the least of his brothers (he took five men and presented them to Pharaoh)'? To teach you that these brothers were not strong... And why did Yosef Hatzaddik take these five men? For he knew exactly which brothers were strong, and acted cleverly. He said, 'If I present strong ones to Pharaoh, he will see them and make them his soldiers.'"

Was Pharaoh really unaware that Yosef's brothers were strong and had killed the entire town of Shechem? Furthermore, Chazal say [Tanchuma, Vayigash 5], "At that moment Yehuda screamed loudly and all the walls of Egypt fell down. All the animals in Egypt miscarried, Yosef fell from his chair, Pharaoh got off his chair and both of them fell, and the heads of all the strong ones who were standing in Yosef's presence, turned backwards and remained in that position until they died."

So how can we say that Pharaoh was unaware of the brothers' strength? How did Yosef think he could deceive Pharaoh?!

But this is what Yosef told the brothers: if I tell Pharaoh you are shepherds, then even if you are extremely mighty he will not appoint you as officers over the Egyptian army, because since the Egyptians worship sheep they consider shepherds an abomination. On the contrary, Pharaoh will distance you from him.

Why did Yosef not want his brothers to be appointed as officers in the Egyptian army? Because he knew that in the future Am Yisrael would spend several hundred years in Egypt, and if they settle among the Egyptians they would learn from their bad ways. Therefore he cleverly gave them this advice so Pharaoh would want to keep them at a distance.

We see that Hashem too prepared the ground

so Am Yisrael should not assimilate and learn from the corrupt ways of the locals. When Ya'akov and his sons went down to Egypt, they numbered only seventy souls, and only once they settled in Egypt did Hashem bless the women and they gave birth to six babies at once. Had they given birth to multiple babies already in Canaan, it could be that not all of these many descendants would have gone down to Egypt. Some might have remained in Canaan and eventually assimilated. That is why Hashem held back this blessing until they went down to Egypt. And there, since Ya'akov Avinu was with them, they did not learn from the ways of the Egyptians.

However, later on [Bereishit 47:6] we find that Pharaoh says, "appoint them as chamberlains over the livestock that belongs to me." Rashi writes: "Over my sheep." But if shepherds were so abhorred in Egypt, why would Pharaoh appoint them to care for his sheep?

Chazal say, "As long as a tzaddik lives in a city, he constitutes its glory, its splendor, and its beauty; when he departs, its glory, splendor and beauty depart with him." This implies that when a tzaddik is in a city, the townspeople learn from his ways and they too perform good deeds and engage in Torah study. As Chazal say, "Fortunate is the tzaddik and fortunate is his neighbor."

So when Ya'akov and his sons went down to Egypt, the Egyptians learnt from their upright ways and ceased worshipping the sheep.

Once Pharaoh brought the brothers into his dominion, they became concerned that they might assimilate with the Egyptians. So Ya'akov's children accepted certain restrictions upon themselves to prevent this. They distanced themselves from immorality and did not change their names, language and dress [Lekach Tov, Shemot 6:6]. And in the merit of these things they were eventually redeemed.

We can take a lesson from this: if the wicked Egyptians learnt from the upright ways of Ya'akov and his sons and stopped worshipping idols, all the more so must we learn from the ways of tzaddikim. Furthermore, if they offer rebuke, it behooves us all the more to pay heed to their words.



A Portent of Penitence

A woman once phoned me and bitterly related that her husband no longer followed the Torah way of life. They had been married for many years and merited children, wealth, and honor. Instead of thanking Hashem for his good fortune by observing mitzvot with joy and wholeheartedly, her husband chose to move farther and farther away from the straight path.

I was very pained by her words. I thought that if I spoke to her husband, I might be able to influence him positively, so I asked her to tell him to come to see me. The woman had her reservations, but Hashem helped her out in her altruistic mission.

That night, the man could not sleep. Suddenly, he fell into a deep slumber. In his dream, he saw me yelling at him, "Why have you left the path of Torah and betrayed your G-d?! How dare you violate the Torah's mitzvot! Aren't you ashamed of your ways?!" And then I beat him soundly for his wickedness.

The next morning, he confided his frightful dream to his wife. She wisely suggested he discuss it with me.

I confirmed his dream by rebuking him sternly. I then attempted to encourage him to mend his ways. He eventually accepted my words and promised never to return to his mistaken ways. With *siyata di'Shmaya*, he has since made strides in his spiritual journey.

The Haftarah

"The word of Hashem came to me...Now you, son of man" (Yechezkel 37)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the kingdom of Yehuda and the kingdom of Yosef which will unite in the future, as is written: "Now you, Son of Man, take for yourself one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yehuda and for the Children of Israel, his comrades; and take one piece of wood and write upon it, 'For Yosef..', and they will become united in your hand."

The Parsha too speaks about Yehuda who fought to save his brother Binyamin and how eventually all the brothers united with Yosef Hatzaddik who ruled over the entire land of Mitzrayim.

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.

A Blessing for Long Life

When Rabbi Aryeh Leib Ginzburg zt"l, the Sha'agat Aryeh, was appointed Rav of Metz, some community members were concerned about his age, since he was already around seventy years old.

The Sha'agat Aryeh addressed this issue in his next discourse to the community. He began by quoting Ya'akov's reply to Pharaoh "The days of the years of my sojourn... have been few and bad." He pointed out that Pharaoh interrogating his guest, "How many are the days of the years of your life?" is hard to understand, for this is not the appropriate way to welcome a guest. Ya'akov's reply, where he complains about his hardships, is also hard to understand because what connection does this have to Pharaoh's question?

Rabbi Aryeh Leib went on to explain in good taste: "Pharaoh knew that the newfound abundance in Egypt came in Ya'akov's merit, so he feared Ya'akov might not live much longer since he was already very old. He therefore anxiously asked Ya'akov how old he was. Ya'akov understood Pharaoh's concern and answered that in fact he is not as old as he looks. He has still not reached the life span of his forefathers, and the fact that his hairs are white is only because of the troubles that befell him.

"I too can say," continued the Sha'agat Aryeh, "that 'few and bad' have been the days of my life. I was pursued and exiled and I have aged, but I promise you that I will serve as your Rav for a long time yet."

Earlier on, when the Sha'agat Aryeh lived in Minsk and served as Rosh Yeshiva, several people harassed him, and he was eventually forced to leave the city. One righteous lady in Minsk, Blumka Vilenkin, assisted him financially and provided him with food.

This righteous woman built a special *beit midrash* for him, and until the Second World War it was known as "Blumkas Kloiz" (the *beit midrash* of Blumka). Later on, Rabbi Chaim Volozhin and his *talmidim* established a *yeshiva*, generously supported by Blumka, in this *beit midrash*. The greatest *talmidie* *chachamim* of the generation were appointed to serve as its *Roshei Yeshiva*.

It is told that the Sha'agat Aryeh blessed this charitable woman that she should merit building a *beit kneset* in Minsk and another one in the Holy Land. Many years later when she was almost 80 years old, Blumka longed to fulfill the *tzaddik's* blessing and move to Eretz Yisrael, so she went to ask advice from Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin.

This was Rabbi Chaim's reply: "Since you have a blessing from the Rebbe, why hurry to travel? Who knows how much longer you will live after that? Either way you have been promised that you will build a *beit kneset* in Eretz Yisrael, so it is better that you should wait and see how the matter works out."

The woman heeded Rabbi Chaim's advice and remained in Minsk. Only many years later when she was even older, did she finally move to Eretz Yisrael and establish a *beit Kneset*, in accordance with the blessing of the Sha'agat Aryeh. And as soon as the building was completed this righteous lady passed away...



The Sabbatical Year

1. If a field is full of pests that can harm the trees, some say it is forbidden to spray pesticide to kill them. Spraying to prevent pests is also forbidden. Some say that the prohibition against "smoking" a tree (burning a substance underneath it to produce smoke that eliminates pests) only applies if one's intention is to improve the tree's condition, but spraying (the modern equivalent) to prevent damage – if professionals claim that the tree will otherwise die or most of its fruit will rot – is permissible, especially if the act is carried out by a non-Jew. Others do not agree with this opinion. Since nowadays Shemittah is d'rabbanan, one can follow the more lenient opinion. But before spraying one must clarify that this is necessary to preserve the fruits or vegetables, and not only as a precautionary measure as in other years.

Today, since soil is full of pests, and agriculture is also extremely dense, almost every act of spraying is done for the sake of preserving the tree.

2. If mice are causing damage to the trees, one may trap the mice during Shemittah as usual. Even in a grain field adjacent to an orchard one may trap them in the normal manner. During Shemittah one may spread mice poison to prevent the mice from damaging the trees.

3. If weeds are growing in one's field, interfering with and suffocating the plants, and it is clear that without action the plants will be harmed in a substantial way, one may spray weed killer. If this does not help, one may clear the area of weeds even with a regular hoe, but must be careful not to overturn the soil.

If it is extremely necessary, one may even use regular agricultural tools, such as a knife that does not overturn the soil. This ruling should not be entrusted to every individual's discretion, and one must ask a Rav who will evaluate the particular case.

4. One may tidy the garden adjacent to one's house and get rid of garbage that is strewn around, as long as his intention is just to clean the garden, and not to prepare it for sowing. Similarly, it is permissible to sweep fallen branches from one's garden with a broom, even a special grass-sweeper. One may also remove stones, as long as it is clear that his intention is not to work the land. It is also permissible to clear one's garden of weeds and thorns if his intention is to clear an area to sit and enjoy the garden, or to be able to walk there. It is preferable to place a table and chairs in one's garden so it should be clear that his intention is to use the garden and not to prepare it for sowing, although according to the basic halacha a garden adjacent to a house does not need any indication, for this itself serves as an indication.

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



Crying About the Destruction of the Beit Hamikdash

"Then he fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck and wept"
[Bereishit 45:14].

Rashi explains: "He wept over the two Batei Mikdash that would stand in Binyamin's portion and would eventually be destroyed. 'And Binyamin wept upon his neck' – for the Mishkan of Shiloh that would stand in Yosef's portion and would eventually be destroyed."

But why did they cry now over the future destruction of the Batei Mikdash? What is the connection to the present events? Furthermore, why did each one cry over the destruction that would take place in the other's portion, and not about their own devastation?

We can answer based on an explanation from the Chafetz Chaim [Chafetz Chaim Al HaTorah] on the verse "And Yosef said to his brothers, 'I am Yosef.'" From the time the brothers first went down to Egypt to collect food, and Yosef acted like a stranger to them, spoke with them harshly, and accused them of being spies, they questioned why all this had befallen them. The second time they went down they again pondered and asked, "Why did Hashem do this to us?" But once they heard their brother utter the two words, *אני יוסף*, I am Yosef, all their questions immediately fell aside. Similarly, in the future when the whole world will hear the two words, *אני ה',* I am Hashem, all perplexities and doubts about the way Hashem manages the world, which now seems incomprehensible to us, will suddenly be completely clarified, and all mankind will realize it was the Hand of Hashem that performed all this for our benefit.

These words of the Chafetz Chaim can answer the above questions. By nature, Yosef and Binyamin should have cried at being united after so many years of separation. But since they understood that this separation was a Heavenly decree and for their good, they did not want to weep. Yet since they could not restrain themselves from crying, they cried and had in mind that this weeping should be over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.

The reason why they cried especially over the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and not about something else, is because the separation they experienced was a result of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred), the same sin for which the second Beit Hamikdash was destroyed [Yoma 9b]. Therefore now when they united, they cried about the destruction which was a result of *sinat chinam*. Since they also wanted to completely eradicate this *sinat chinam* from among them, they each cried about the destruction in the other one's portion.

Since Ya'akov Avinu was on a higher level and did not need to cry at all when meeting Yosef after so many years of separation, because he knew that everything emanated from Hashem, he therefore recited *Kri'at Shema* as an expression of Hashem's Oneness and that all is from Him.



Rabbi Chaim Todros Tefilinski zt"l

The Batei Wittenberg neighborhood in Yerushalayim was blessed with a community of outstanding Jews, among them exceptional tzaddikim and talmidei chachamim whose entire aspiration in life was to engage in Torah study and serve Hashem. Among those distinguished notables stood out the personality of an enigmatic individual whose true nature was difficult to ascertain, for he took great pains that people should not think highly of him: Rabbi Chaim Todros Tefilinski zt"l.

Many people regarded him as a curious enigma, and there were even those who, for lack of knowledge, degraded him. However, in fact he was one of the unique, hidden tzaddikim of our generation. All that we know about him can only be considered as "revealing a tefach and covering up two tefachim."

Already in his youth he merited finishing the entire Shas, and later on became well-versed in all areas of the holy Torah, Shulchan Aruch, Kabbalistic works, the holy Zohar and others. Later on he spent much of his time practicing seclusion and

abstention, engaging in Torah study and prayer alone, totally detaching himself from all worldly pleasures.

Those who knew him well were aware that they were standing in the presence of a great personality, a holy man of elevated spiritual stature. He was known for his great power of prayer and bringing about tremendous salvation beyond the ways of nature. However, for reasons he kept to himself, he behaved as a common Jew, and utilized every possible ruse so those who saw him should think he is a broken, unfortunate man, G-d forbid.

He had a close relationship with many gedolim and tzaddikim who used to discuss Torah with him, among them some famous gedolei Yisrael and also other hidden tzaddikim. But the admiration accorded to him by the gedolei Yisrael, and his true greatness, he took care to cover up with simplistic behavior, to the extent that it was hard to treat him with respect. Many times Rabbi Chaim would be sitting and engaging in Torah with particular enthusiasm, but the moment someone walked into the house, he quickly closed his sefer and started behaving like a drunkard and time waster...

This approach of humiliating himself, he sometimes carried out in an extreme manner and so made it very difficult for others to discern his true nature. He could act like a complete ignoramus, a degree of self-sacrifice not many people are capable of undertaking.

In a rare moment of candor Rabbi Chaim once divulged to his talmidim: "Do you think it is not hard for me to make out as if I am a drunkard, and disgrace myself and

also cause others to disrespect me? But what can I do since publicizing myself would lead to my end!"

Rabbi Chaim once went to the home of Maran Hagaon Rabbeinu Yisrael Abuchatzera zt"l in Netivot. The Baba Sali was in the midst of a seudat mitzvah, and many distinguished personalities were present.

Suddenly Rabbi Chaim climbed onto the table and began dancing and jumping around. One of the guests, thinking he was a crazed individual, shouted at him to get down for he was displaying blatant disregard for the honor of the Altar (the tzaddik's table) and the honor of the tzaddik. But the Baba Sali grew angry with him and sent him away, while instructing Rabbi Chaim to continue dancing on the table as he wishes.

Later on, the son-in-law of the Baba Sali, Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Yehudayoff zt"l explained what lay behind this. "The Baba Sali whispered to me: 'You should know that there was a very harsh decree, and Rabbi Chaim danced and danced until he annulled the decree.' He also spoke highly of every movement that Rabbi Chaim did..."

During the last period of his life, Rabbi Chaim often mentioned that he can foresee the occurrence of a strong earthquake, and thousands of Jewish people could lose their lives, G-d forbid. He then turned then to a family member and said, "I will go (die) as an atonement. I cannot bear this." And indeed several days later, on the seventh of Shevat, his soul departed in a storm to heaven.