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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

Yosef Hatzaddik's Holiness Endures for Eternity

"When G-d will indeed remember you, then you must bring my bones up out of here" [Bereishit 50:25].

Before his passing, Yosef commanded his brothers that when they leave Egypt they should take his bones and bring them to Eretz Yisrael. The sefer Umatok Ha'or asks: Yosef Hatzaddik was known as "A righteous one, foundation of the world," and as we know, the body of a completely righteous person does not putrefy after his passing. The body stays complete, just as when he was alive. So why did Yosef ask his brothers to take his bones, he should have told them to take his body. Why did he think only his bones would remain and not a complete body?

The sefer quotes an answer from Rabbeinu Shabti HaKohen zt"l: Yosef Hatzaddik pleaded with Hashem that his body should rot and only his bones remain, because since he was king in Egypt, his body enjoyed the honor accorded to royalty and he was not pleased about benefitting from this honor. Yosef therefore asked his brothers to take his bones out of Egypt for he knew his body would rot since he himself had asked for it.

However, this seems hard to understand. It was Hashem's wish that Yosef Hatzaddik should be king and rule over Egypt. Hashem, the One who determines all occurrences, made it happen in the first place that Yosef Hatzaddik should have dreams which resulted in his brothers becoming jealous of him. Hashem made it come about that they sell him as a servant to Egypt and it was Hashem's plan that following this, Yosef Hatzaddik would rule over Egypt. So how do we reconcile the fact that Yosef punished his body by asking that it rot because it enjoyed the honors of royalty, if this is what Hashem wanted? It was all part of the plan that Yaakov Avinu should descend to Egypt in an honorable fashion, to fulfill the decree of the Egyptian bondage.

I would like to suggest an answer. Indeed the body of a tzaddik does not decay and remains complete after his death. In Tevet 5777, a famous incident demonstrating this idea occurred. The bones of two righteous brothers from Morocco were exhumed and transferred to Har Hamenuchot, a cemetery in Yerushalayim. How astounded were the Chevra Kaddisha to see that many years after their passing, these two bodies were as whole as the day they died! I knew these two brothers well, from my youth. They were devout followers of the esteemed Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy"א, and they shared with me many stories about my illustrious grandfather.

Yosef Hatzaddik punished his body by asking that only his bones should remain after his passing. He wanted to punish himself for dreaming thoughts against his brothers, the holy tribes, and for speaking lashon hara about them to their father, thereby causing them to become jealous of him and hate him, to the extent that they wanted to kill him. Even though in the end they asked him for forgiveness, and he forgave them and they also forgave him, nevertheless Yosef still asked Hashem for this punishment.

This idea is extraordinary and demonstrates the extent of Yosef Hatzaddik's greatness. With this act he showed his brothers that he had forgiven them completely and how much he loves and cherishes them. And due to his strong feelings of closeness to them, he punished his body because he caused jealousy and hatred.

Yosef Hatzaddik wished to atone for sinning against his brothers, the holy tribes. But, on account of his self-sacrifice and willingly giving up his body for Bnei Yisrael, he merited that his spirit remained with them during their long and hard years of exile. And throughout the generations, for eternity, the holy Yosef Hatzaddik is considered as "The righteous one, foundation of the world."



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Hilula

14 Tevet – Rabbi Rafael Meir Panigel,
author of Lev Margeh

15 Tevet – Rabbi Chaim Mordechai
Rosenbaum, Admor of Nadvorna

16 Tevet – Rabbi Avraham HaLevi Shar

17 Tevet – Rabbi Yaakov Krantz, the
Dubno Maggid

18 Tevet – Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech
Shapira, author of Bnei Yissachar

19 Tevet – Rabbi Avraham Shmuel
Binyamin Sofer, the Ktav Sofer

20 Tevet – Rabbeinu Yaakov
Abuchatzera, the Abir Yaakov



Soaring Above Nature

A man related that when traveling abroad, he once forgot his bag, which contained his tefillin, at the airport.

As soon as he realized he was missing his tefillin, he hurried to retrace his steps. But to his great consternation he was too late.

The abandoned bag had aroused the suspicion of the security personnel. They summoned the police, who detonated the satchel, thinking they were preventing a tragedy, G-d forbid.

When the man discovered his demolished bag, his eyes filled with tears. But his cries of anguish were immediately converted to tears of joy as he discovered that his tefillin had remained intact! Everything else was destroyed beyond recognition.

To corroborate his wondrous story, the man presented me with a picture of the complete tefillin.

This man merited an open miracle. Hashem saw how concerned he was for his tefillin, which demonstrated his connection with his Maker. He therefore performed this miracle for him, allowing the tefillin to stay whole, above the laws of nature.

The Haftarah

"Kind David's days grew near to die" (Mela-chim I, 2)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the death of David Hamelech a"h, and his final instructions to his son Shlomo. The Parsha speaks about Ya'akov Avinu's death and his testament to his son Yosef.

Who Deserves the Degrading Nickname 'Donkey'?

"Several years ago," related Rabbi Chaim Zaid shlit"a, "I was innocently walking in the street on the way to delivering a lecture in the Midrashia. In one of the alleys, I saw a group of old men sitting in a cafe. As I passed by, one of them shouted at me:

"Hareidi?!... Ya- donkey!"

"I have been called a lot of derogatory nicknames over the years for being an ultra-Orthodox Jew: 'parasite', 'dodger', 'bloodsucker', among other pearls of the tongue, and I'm already used to it. But 'donkey'? I? A donkey?! The entire world is supported by the Torah and mitzvot of the observant Jews. The entire universe and all its inhabitants exist only in our merit, and for our benefit! I am a donkey?"

"But do you know what?"

"After some thought, I came to the conclusion that it is true. I, and all those who fear G-d, are truly donkeys.

"What happened? I remembered my great-grandfather..."

"My father, Yitzchak HaLevi, was a trader living in Yemen. Every day, after Shacharit and breakfast, he would take his donkey and set out for the nearby villages to sell his wares to the residents.

"Towards evening he would return home, have something to eat and then make his way to the beit kneset for Mincha and Arvit, followed by several pleasurable hours of revitalizing Torah study. This went on for many years.

"It happened one Friday. My father Yitzchak dragged his feet on endless, winding and tedious paths, making his way to his hometown after another day of work. Slowly, almost like the donkey's deliberately slow pace, the sun began setting.

"Shabbat was fast approaching, he still had a long way to go, and the donkey was walking at a terribly slow pace.

"The minutes ticked by, and as if to annoy, the donkey kept up

his unhurried pace. The vigorous blows to his back did not help much. How would he make it home in time for Shabbat?"

"Shabbat began spreading its wings over the peaceful village, and from all directions the residents made their way to the beit kneset, dressed in their elegant Shabbat clothing, walking gracefully with their peyot fluttering in the light evening wind. Suddenly they heard the sound of hasty running, combined with the braying of a clearly displeased donkey..."

"Those who glanced back to the path leading to the village, gaped in surprise. They stopped in astonishment, but soon burst out laughing.

"My father Yitzchak had preceded sunset by a few minutes..."

"What lesson can we learn from this?"

"Sometimes, when the goal is so important, it is appropriate to even carry a donkey in our hands for it!

"And so, next to the cafe, facing these ignorant old men, I understood:

"I, who fears G-d, am a donkey! Absolutely. 'Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey', the verse tells us, and Rashi explains that he bears the yoke of Torah like a strong donkey who is loaded with a heavy burden.

"I am a donkey who 'bears the burden of Torah' with true joy, and tries to constantly fulfill Hashem's will, with all my strength. I am a donkey, and it is appropriate for me to carry myself with great pride.

"I should feel embarrassed?!"

"With my avodat Hashem I am carrying the load of bringing the final redemption!

"We Torah observant Jews, who cling to Hashem, our G-d, and believe in Him wholeheartedly, will, despite everything, be the ones to bring Mashiach. On our backs – a back that bends itself over the gemara in a Torah shiur, despite all the challenges. On our backs – that stubbornly withstand the enormous challenges we face. On our backs – that courageously overcome being beaten with stabs of temptations. On our backs – Mashiach will arrive!"



The Sabbatical Year

1. If a field is covered with snow, and leaving it would cause damage to the crop, one may remove the snow during Shemittah.
2. If a tree is covered with snow which is causing damage to the fruits, one may remove the snow during Shemittah, because this is considered as sustaining the tree and not enhancing growth. Also if the snow could cause the branches to break, one may remove the snow from those branches.
3. If a lot of snow has fallen on an etrog tree which could cause the etrogim to spoil and consequently become unfit for the mitzvah, one may remove the snow.
4. During Shemittah one may cover seeds, fruit and other plants with sheets of plastic etc. to protect them from rain and snow. One may also erect canopies for the trees to protect them from the sun or cold, as long as it serves to sustain the tree and not enhance growth.
5. One may be lenient and wrap grapes on a vine with a plastic bag to prevent them from being eaten by birds. This is also permitted for other fruits, as long as it is done to prevent damage and not enhance growth. However this would be forbidden if one's intention is to prevent damage to the external casing of the fruit.

Treasures

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



The Greatness of Menashe and Ephraim in Egypt

"Someone said to Yosef, 'Behold! your father is ill.' So he took his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, with him" [Bereishit 48:1].

When Yosef Hatzaddik heard that his father Yaakov was sick, he did not go alone to visit him, but took with him his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, so Yaakov could bless them. This raises a question: how can it be that out of all Yaakov's grandsons, only Menashe and Ephraim, Yosef's sons, merited receiving a blessing from Yaakov? Why did the other tribes not bring their children to Yaakov for a blessing?

I would like to suggest the following answer: We are told [Shemot 1:1], "And these are the names of the Children of Yisrael who were coming to Egypt; with Yaakov, each man and his household came." It is clear from this verse that Yaakov came down to Egypt with all his sons, as indeed the next verse goes on to detail their names. There is a famous statement from Chazal that grandsons are considered as sons. If so, it is obvious that not only Yaakov's actual sons, the first generation, came down with him to Egypt, but also the second generation – all Yaakov's grandsons who grew up on their grandfather's lap, as if they were his children.

However, this does not include Yosef and his two sons. Neither he (for most of his life) nor his two sons, Menashe and Ephraim, were raised by Yaakov, for they were brought up in Egypt, the most immoral land in the world, a place full of impurity and idol worship. The verse stresses [Shemot 1:5], "And all the persons who emerged from Yaakov's loins were seventy souls, and Yosef was in Egypt." However, what is the connection between the two parts of the verse – between Yaakov's seventy descendants and Yosef being in Egypt? The verse is pointing out that Yaakov's descendants who went down to Egypt with him numbered seventy souls, but Yosef was not counted among them since he was already in Egypt.

On the other hand, the verse stresses "and Yosef was in Egypt," because Yosef and his sons, despite living in the impure land of Egypt, grew up to become tzaddikim, just as the other holy tribes. Chazal expound on the words "and Yosef was in Egypt": "To point out Yosef's righteousness. He was the same Yosef – even though he became king of Egypt, he retained his righteousness."



The Gaon Rabbi Salman Mutzefi zt"l

Young Salman was only nine years old when he stealthily left his parents' home to participate in the levaya of the gadol hador of Babylonia, Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim zy"l, the Ben Ish Chai. Next to the earth shovels, he accepted upon himself to study Torah with great diligence and behave with piety and abstinence. His parents, who noticed his extreme behavior, tried to restrain him, but he remained firm in his commitment.

His biography tells of his exceptional diligence, day and night. To ensure that he would wake up at midnight to study Torah, the young boy tied a rope to his hand, attaching the other end to the bolt of the front door. In this way, when his father left the house at midnight to go and study Torah, he felt a tug on his hand which woke him up.

This went on for two weeks, after which his father realized and stopped him. But the young Salman found a new tactic. He tied a rope on his hand and lowered the end through the window to the back of the house. He then asked his friend with whom he studied to pull the rope when passing by his house.

And so the two set off for the beit midrash, learning secretly until dawn, and making great strides in their Torah study.

Most of his Torah learning he imbibed from the mekubal Chacham Yehuda Patia zt"l. After he completed Shas and Arba Turim, Chacham Yehuda Patia handed him the sefer Eitz Chaim and instructed him to learn one chapter from the sefer, and the following Shabbat relay what he had learnt. Salman's pleas that he was still young did not help, and from then on he did not move from his Rebbe's side. Together they delved into the revealed Torah, also secretly studying the hidden Torah for many hours every day.

Once his father became ill, which affected the family's financial situation, Rabbi Salman began working as assistant to the wealthy Menachem Daniel, member of the Iraqi Senate and head of the Jewish community in Baghdad. Daniel, who noticed Chacham Salman's success, set aside a room for him in his office to manage his account books, and also suggested he manage his business overseas. Rabbi Salman learnt English, Turkish and French, and was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Accountant. Despite his obligations, Rabbi Salman devoted eight hours a day to toiling in Torah, besides the eight hours he spent in the office. He acquired the special merit of supporting Torah, and every Rosh Chodesh would give one of the Roshei Yeshiva of Midrash Beit Zilcha the full stipend for one of the avreichim, who was unaware of its source.

He was always careful not to be photographed. His family members believed his behavior was based

on the belief that harmful spirits line the portrait of man, created in G-d's image, and disturb his avodat Hashem. But the Rav had a completely different reason, which he clarified: "The main reason I sharply oppose being photographed is not the reason you think. The true reason is much more serious!

"When a person allows himself to be photographed, he also begins creating albums and collecting pictures, eventually amassing hundreds of pictures. One day he decides to look through all the pictures, and wastes precious time. He can spend quarter of an hour, or half an hour, looking at the pictures, wasting time that could be spent studying Torah! This is a serious sin! In fact, when being photographed, he is preparing the way for the sin of not using the time for Torah study."

Once he was asked why he wears shoes without laces. His surprising answer was: "To save time!"

In 5714 he lost consciousness due to a kidney problem. The next day, when he regained consciousness, he related that his soul had left his body but the Heavenly Court decided to grant him an extension of life. Now at every moment he is prepared to be summoned to the Heavenly Court.

In 5735, on a Tuesday close to midnight, after reciting the blessing, with his customary total concentration, "Through Whose word everything came to be," he lay down on his right side, recited Kri'at Shema and returned his soul to his Maker – in holiness and purity.