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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

21 Tevet - Rabbi Yisrael Dov Ber, the
Maggid of Vilendik

22 Tevet - Rabbi Yaakov HaKohen
Traub of Salton

23 Tevet - Rabbi Avraham Palagi, author
of Vayan Avraham

24 Tevet - Rabbi Shneur Zalman of
Ladi, the Ba'al Hatanya

25 Tevet - Rabbi Yaakov HaLevi, a
Beit El Chassid

26 Tevet - Rabbi Shlomo Mazuz, author
of Kerem Shlomo

27 Tevet - Rabbi Shimshon Raphael
Hirsch of Frankfurt

The Virtue of Rejoicing in Another's Happiness

"The wrath of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, 'Is there Aharon your brother, the Levite? I know that he will surely speak; moreover, behold, he is going out to meet you and when he sees you he will rejoice in his heart'" [Shemot 4:14].

Chazal say [Shabbat 139a] that because Aharon rejoiced in his heart when seeing Moshe, he was rewarded with wearing the Choshen Mishpat (Breastplate) on his heart. Aharon HaKohen was supposed to be the leader of Yisrael, but when he saw Moshe his brother had been appointed to greatness, he gave up his position and rejoiced in his heart at Moshe's good fortune.

My master and teacher, the gaon Rabbi Gershon Libman zt"l asks, where do we see Hashem's conduct of 'measure for measure' in this situation? What is the connection between Aharon rejoicing at Moshe's happiness and meriting wearing the Choshen Mishpat on his heart?

Chazal explain that the Ark of Testimony (Aron Ha'edut) created by Betzalel was made of three boxes. The primary one was of acacia wood. A second, larger box of gold was made, into which the wooden one was placed, and a third, smaller golden one was made, which was put inside the wooden one. Thus the main box was covered with gold, inside and out. If we consider the matter we will understand the connection between the Aron that was covered with gold within and without, and Aharon the Kohen who was considered like a Holy of Holies, a Kohen Gadol for Hashem.

When a person wholeheartedly rejoices at another person's happiness and success, this is manifest in the way he receives the other person, evident both externally and internally. His entire being demonstrates happiness at the other person's good fortune. The more the happiness is internal, the more this is evident externally, on the person's face.

This person who rejoices at another's success, both deeply inside him and externally on his face, resembles the holy Ark of Testimony

that was covered with gold, pure gold within and without, as in the concept of 'tocho kebaro' – his internal state resembles his external image, because both internally and externally he is happy for his friend's good fortune.

Even though no person saw the golden Ark that was placed inside the Holy of Holies, particularly since the Ark was always kept closed, and only Aharon the Kohen entered the Holy of Holies once a year on Yom Kippur, nevertheless we learn from this that man, who is comparable to the holy Ark, must be covered with gold inside and out, meaning he must rejoice at another's happiness and success at all times, both deep inside his heart and also by outwardly greeting him with a pleasant countenance.

The verse tells us that the Ark housed the Tablets of Law (Luchot Ha'edut), and Chazal say [Berachot 8b], "The Luchot and the broken Luchot were placed in the Ark." What do we learn from the fact that the Ark also housed the broken Luchot? This teaches us that we must consider our fellow Jew as the holy Ark that was covered with gold within and without, while we must consider ourselves as the broken Luchot.

On the one hand, we must place the holy Torah – the complete Luchot – inside ourselves, but on the other hand we must conduct ourselves with humility and lowliness like the broken Luchot, as in "a heart broken and humbled", out of love and awe of Hashem. However, one must regard others as supremely important.

One who behaves with humility and lowliness, while elevating his friend, will merit all kinds of goodness, and will also merit being considered a holy Ark, Holy of Holies for Hashem. This will happen if his entire being is dedicated to Hashem alone; a person's entire essence must be given over for Hashem. When you regard others as important and truly rejoice, both within and without, in their happiness, you will merit becoming an Ark of Testimony, covered with pure gold within and without.



Faith – Harbinger of Hope

I was once asked to visit a sick man who was hovering between This World and the Next.

When I entered his room, I found him lying as still as a stone. I began talking to him, telling him that even when a sharp sword rests on one's neck, he may not despair of Heavenly mercy.

His daughter, sitting at his side, suddenly burst into tears. She cried out to me, "Honored Rabbi, I am so envious of you. You have such strong faith and hope for a better tomorrow. As for me, my father is as good as dead."

I shuddered at hearing her words. "What gives you the license to give your father a death sentence while he is still alive? Where there is life, there is hope. One may never despair of Heavenly mercy!"

My words penetrated her heart and she was truly remorseful over her words. Eventually, in a most miraculous fashion, the man fully recovered.

When I met his daughter some time later she said, "Honored Rav, you have a tremendous merit in being a man of faith. Your unshakeable faith in Hashem is what fuels you with hope for better times to come."

The Haftarah

"The words of Yirmiyahu the son of Chilkiyahu"
(Yirmiyahu 1,2)

Ashkenazim read from Yeshaya 27, **"[Days] are coming when Ya'akov will take root"**, and Babylonians and Yemenites read from Yechezkel 16, **"Son of man, inform"**.

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells about Yirmiyahu who at first refused to perform the mission that Hashem requested from him by saying that he doesn't know how to speak for he is just a youth. In the Parsha, Moshe Rabbeinu tried to absolve himself of Hashem's mission by saying that he is not a man of words.

It is a Mitzvah to Publicize

The Midrash Rabba expounds on the repetition in the verse, "The Children of Israel were fruitful, teemed, increased, and became strong – very, very much so" [Shemot 1:7]. From these six expressions of multiplying (1. fruitful 2. teemed 3. increased 4. became strong 5. very 6. very much), we learn that the Jewish women in Egypt gave birth to six babies at a time.

The gaon Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin zt"l, in his sefer Ozna'im L'Torah, relates a story concerning this miracle and writes, "This matter is a mitzvah to publicize – 'Speak of all His wonders.'"

Once a maskil (irreligious Jew) came to the gaon Rabbi Eliezer Gordon zt"l, Rosh Yeshiva of Telz, claiming this miracle is an exaggeration. "How can a woman give birth to six babies?!"

"Although," added the maskil, "I do believe that Bnei Yisrael multiplied in a miraculous fashion when in Egypt, but from here to the surprising words of the Midrash, is a long stretch..."

He believed they multiplied in a supernatural fashion because it could be proved statistically, and far be it from him to argue with statistics...

How do we see this?

Bnei Yisrael came down to Egypt numbering seventy souls, and remained there for two hundred and ten years. Accordingly, when they left Egypt they should have numbered 1,200, or at most 1,500, but the Torah tells us they were "Six hundred thousand foot soldiers", referring to those who were part of the army, from age twenty to sixty. If we add the number of elderly and children, approximately the same amount, their total amounts to 1,200,000. And adding the women will give us 2,400,000. It is apparent from this number that in Egypt Bnei Yisrael multiplied supernaturally.

"I have no choice but to accept these numbers," the maskil defiantly told Rabbi Eliezer zt"l, "but how can I believe Chazal's statement that each woman gave birth to six at a time?"

This was Rabbi Eliezer's reply:

The number of firstborns, as we are told in Parshat Bamidbar, amounted to 22,273. This was at a time when the Children of Israel, from twenty years of age and up, all those who went out to the legion, totaled 603,550.

Firstborns were counted from the age of one month, while the rest of Bnei Yisrael were counted from age twenty to sixty. So the total number of Bnei Yisrael (603,550) must be doubled (approx. 1,200,000) to include the children and elderly (besides the women who we don't take into account here because only the male firstborns were counted).

The final number is surprising according to today's concepts. If the average family today numbers five members, for every first born there are another four that are not firstborns. But there were only 22,273 firstborns who left Egypt, for a total of 1,200,000 males who left Egypt.

In other words: each woman who gave birth to a male firstborn, gave birth afterwards to approximately fifty-five children (for if there were 22,273 firstborns, there were 22,273 mothers who gave birth to them. And these women produced 1,200,000 males. So if we divide this by 22,273 mothers, it follows that they gave birth to almost 55 children). Since in Moshe's time the average lifespan was seventy years, as the sweet singer of Israel says in Tehillim, "The days of our years among them are seventy years", and generally a woman gives birth not more than ten times, it follows that each woman gave birth to six at once...

The claims of the doubtful questioner melted away... Against his will he was forced to admit the inherent truth in the words of Chazal.



The Sabbatical Year

1. Fruit and grain that grows at some stage during the seventh year (on land that was not sold to a gentile) is imbued with a special holiness known as kedushat shevi'it and must be treated with special care. On the words, "For it is a Jubilee Year, it shall be holy to you", Chazal expound: "Just as the year is holy, so is its produce holy." Due to kedushat shevi'it it is forbidden to spoil, destroy or waste this produce, and it also affects the way the produce may be consumed and sold.

2. Kedushat shevi'it applies to produce that is fit for human or animal consumption. It also applies to produce grown for man's use, such as anointing the body, or paint/dye that contains plant products, cotton seed oil used for kindling lights or cotton fiber used for medicinal purposes.

3. Kedushat shevi'it only applies to produce where the benefit and depletion occurs simultaneously. Meaning, at the same time as benefitting from them they are consumed (such as eating fruit). But a product from which one benefits only after it is used up has no kedushat shevi'it, for example trees grown for firewood, where one benefits from them only once they are burnt and become coals.

4. Kedushat shevi'it only applies to produce whose benefit can be enjoyed equally by all people.

5. Mushrooms that grow during Shemittah do not have kedushat shevi'it, even though they are fit for human consumption.

6. Orlah produce (fruit of a tree in the first three years of its life, from which one may not benefit), does not have kedushat shevi'it.

7. Flax and cotton fibers that are grown for the purpose of manufacturing materials and garments, do not have kedushat shevi'it, even though a minority use them for other purposes. However, some are stringent. Nevertheless, since most materials do not contain Shemittah products, one does not have to be concerned.

8. Cotton seeds grown for animal consumption have kedushat shevi'it.

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

Treasures

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



The Holiness of Torah that Comes Forth from a Holy Mouth

"His sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and summon for you a wet nurse from the Hebrew women, who will nurse the boy for you?'" [Shemot 2:7]

Rashi writes on this verse: "This teaches us that many Egyptian women tried to nurse him but he wouldn't nurse, because he was destined to speak with the Shechina." That is why Miriam suggested bringing a Jewish wet nurse.

Maran the gaon Rabbi Yechiel Michel Feinstein zy"a asks: In reference to the rebuilding of Yerushalayim, the Navi says [Yeshaya 49:23], "Kings will be your nurturers and their princesses your wet nurses." This means that in the future non-Jewish princesses will nurse Jewish children. But it is difficult to understand why this is considered something positive. Here we see that on no account was Moshe Rabbeinu prepared to nurse from a gentile woman. So why does the Navi consider princesses nursing Jewish babies as a virtue?

I would like to suggest the following answer. At the time of the final redemption, this will indeed be an honor for the Jewish people. The Navi is singing our praises by demonstrating the extent to which the Jewish people, and even the small children, will be considered with regard by the rest of the world, for even the gentile princesses will wish to nurse and raise the Jewish children. But Moshe Rabbeinu was of a different status.

When Batya, daughter of Pharaoh, drew Moshe's basket out of the water, it says, "She opened it and saw him, the child, and behold! a youth was crying." Then Miriam, his sister, asked, "Shall I go and summon for you a wet nurse from the Hebrew women, who will nurse the boy for you?" And indeed she went and called Yocheved, his mother. However we can ask that if such a great miracle was performed for Batya – she extended her arm and miraculously it became long enough to reach Moshe's basket and draw it out of the reeds – why did she not merit an additional miracle of her body producing milk, and then she herself could nurse the crying baby?

Moshe Rabbeinu was on a different status than any other Jewish child, because in the future he would go up to heaven to learn the entire Torah with Hashem. He was the one who would bring down the Torah to all Bnei Yisrael, and merited the Torah being called 'Torat Moshe'. It was therefore necessary that his body should always retain the ultimate holiness and should not contain even the slightest trace of blemish and impurity.

In light of this explanation one can add that this could be a reason why we have the custom of eating milky foods on Shavuot – to remember that the Torah we received through Moshe Rabbeinu is pure and clean, and emerged from the mouth of Moshe Rabbeinu who did not taste even one drop of milk from an Egyptian woman. Just as his mouth and entire body was holy, so too the Torah remains entirely holy for Hashem.



Hagaon Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz zt"l

Hagaon Hakadosh Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz zt"l was a unique and special personality in his generation, a faithful reflection of the grandeur of the glorious Tunisia geniuses. On the one hand he was renowned for his humility and gentleness, but on the other hand he was sharp and firm in matters of spirituality, without compromise or concessions when it came to Torah and mitzvot. He was a man of truth who was not afraid of anyone. He stood in the breaches to put Torah on a pedestal and restore the crown of glorious tradition to its former magnificence. He was a tremendous genius who authored several responsa sefarim containing deep Torah ideas.

The Gaon Rabbi Matzliach Mazuz zt"l was the Av Beit Din of Tunis. He born in 5672, on the island of Djerba. He studied under Harav Rachamim Chavita HaKohen zt"l, head of the beit din in Djerba. His diligence and toil in Torah astonished all his acquaintances. At times when his peers were playing children's games, he secluded himself in a corner and

May the Memory of a Tzaddik be for a Blessing

engaged in Torah study, extracting precious pearls which he shared with his teachers and sages of the generation.

After his marriage he supported his family in the same fashion as the other rabbanim in Tunis, who never refrained from engaging in business in addition to Torah study. Since he wished to make Torah his main occupation, he decided to take up easy work that would not demand too much of his time, allowing him to dedicate the majority of his day to Torah study.

He decided to engage in commercial brokerage, accruing profit percentages as a result of commercial transactions he executed. From then on he engaged in business for only a few hours each day – from ten till one in the afternoon, following which he sat and studied Torah for approximately nine hours at a stretch. He did this for three years, until 5707, when he was appointed as Dayan.

"On the first day of my work as a transaction broker", he told his children many years later with a laugh, "I met with a merchant who handed me two hundred thousand francs, in notes of 5,000, for some business transaction. I was totally confused at the sight of the large pile of notes in my hand; I had no idea how many notes made up 200,000 francs... I was worried that if I would take the time to make the calculation, the merchant would realize he was dealing with someone who doesn't know what money looks like, so I pretended I was knowl-

edgeable and well-informed. I just counted the notes – forty in all – took the money, and only after that made the calculation..."

Wishing to build up his livelihood quickly, in his first month of work he dedicated most of the day to brokerage matters, while dedicating the night to Torah study. At the end of the month he calculated that he had earned 40,000 francs!

Curbing the Wagon

"I was sitting by my table," Rabbi Matzliach revealed to his children and students many years later, "with the monthly balance spread in front of me. I was amazed to discover that the profit amounts were twenty times the salary I had anticipated! At that moment I felt how the love of Torah ingrained in my bones for the last twenty-five years straight, began to weaken and fade, taken over by a temptation for money! I was filled with tremendous pain and felt that if I will not stop the wagon right then, it will begin gaining momentum and charge forward so quickly, it will be too late to stop it. Right then and there I accepted upon myself to work only three hours a day, from ten until one, dedicating the rest of my day to Torah study alone."

On 21 Tevet 5731, on the way back from Shacharit in the beit kneset named in memory of Rabbi David Peretz zt"l, in La Protestan street, he was shot several times by a terrorist in the street next to his home. Unfortunately, he died from his wounds on the way to the hospital, Hy"d. Today many Torah institutions around the world carry his name with pride.