

PACHAD DAVID

Yitro

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi **David Chananya Pinto** shlita
Son of the tzaddik Rabbi **Moshe Ahron Pinto** zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi **Chaim Pinto** zy"l

When Yitro, the priest of Midyan, Moshe's father-in-law, heard" (Shemot 18:1).

We are told (*Shmuel* 1:15) that Yitro and his family lived near Amalek. This is difficult. How could Yitro go to live near Amalek, the antithesis of Yitro? Yitro forsook all worldly honor and came to the desert to join Bnei Yisrael and accept the Heavenly Yoke upon himself. And Amalek was the first one to dare come and fight with Bnei Yisrael. Although Amalek too surely heard of the wonders and miracles that were done for Bnei Yisrael, Amalek nevertheless dared to cool off the attitude toward fighting with Bnei Yisrael. Hashem told Moshe at the event of Har Sinai to command Am Yisrael not to approach the mountain or even touch its edge. Moshe did as he was told. Nevertheless, Moshe was told to go command them again. Moshe replied that he had already told them. Hashem told him to tell them again anyway. What was the reason for this?

The idea is that the mountain symbolizes the Yetzer Hara, as our Sages say (*Sukkah* 52a) that in the future the Yetzer Hara will seem to the righteous like a mountain. The Torah means to teach us that the Yetzer Hara is very powerful, as we are told (*Chovot Halevavot*) that our greatest destested enemy is the Yetzer Hara. When we are asleep, it is awake. He tries to trip us up by all available means. If he does not succeed, he does not lose hope of succeeding at a later opportunity. This is the fiercest battle and it lasts for our entire life.

Why does the Torah mention that Moshe went up the mountain and came down the mountain? To teach us that the power of the Yetzer Hara is great indeed and there will always be successes and failures. We must not let this scare us. We must be aware that this is the nature of the battle with the Yetzer Hara; sometimes he wins and sometimes we win.

Therefore, Hashem said to Moshe that despite the fact that I commanded Am Yisrael not to touch the mountain, you should command them again to ensure they do not transgress because the Yetzer Hara is very strong and can cause them to stumble. They need to be commanded again and again so they come to understand to be careful and distance themselves from the Yetzer Hara so they will be out of range of a bowshot.

Rashi asks, what did Yitro hear that caused his spirit to be aroused to the extent that he went to join Am

maskil Le'David Amalek Symbolizes the Evil Inclination



Yisrael in the Wilderness? He heard about the Splitting of the Sea and the War with Amalek. Now, the Splitting of the Sea was a supernatural event, where we literally see the providential Hand of G-d. Surely this can cause his spirit to be stirred. But why did the War with Amalek cause him to be thus aroused?

Yitro saw how far Amalek deteriorated and to what great depravity he had reached. When Yitro saw that all the other gentile nations dreaded

to approach Am Yisrael while Amalek feared not, Yitro realized to what extreme one could reach. Amalek heard about the miracles and wonders and remained unaffected. From this Yitro learned about the awesome control of the Yetzer Hara. Therefore, it was the War of Amalek that so inspired him.

Even though it is important to stay far from an evil neighbor, in this instance Yitro felt it was crucial that he live close to Amalek so he would always remember what inspired him so. This would constantly strengthen him during his entire life in his battle against the Yetzer Hara.

We need to know that it is not easy to merit making Torah a part of us. It is only possible by waging a strong and perpetual war against the Yetzer Hara. Because of this it is understandable why the entire Parashah is named after Yitro. When we merit to find something that brings us inspiration, we are required to make ourselves a reminder of that inspiration so we can use it to continue to strengthen ourselves against the Yetzer Hara.

The modus operandi of the Yetzer Hara is to emphasize and embellish worldly and materialistic matters and to show how the pleasures of this world sparkle and glitter even though they are external and intrinsically empty. It presents them as pleasing and attractive to the eyes and heart and causes us to be drawn after them. However, when it portrays Torah and mitzvot to us, it does not allow us to see how beautiful they are despite their resplendent inner nature. To have a true experience of Torah and mitzvot we need to taste them for ourselves, as it says (*Tehilim* 34:9), "Taste this for yourselves and you shall see how good Hashem is." It is not enough just to look. The pleasure of Torah is not noticeable on the surface. We need to taste it for ourselves. Then we will feel and taste its goodness.

24 Shevat 5784
3 February 2024

1045



Hilula

24 Shevat
Rabbi Shaul HaLevi Mortera,
Av Bet Din of Amsterdam

25 Shevat
Rabbi Yisrael Lipkin of Salant,
founder of Mussar Movement

26 Shevat
Rabbi Yosef Berdugo,
author of *Shufre D'Yosef*

27 Shevat
Rabbi Chaim Bardugo

28 Shevat
Rabbi Vidal Angel,
Ra'avad Yerushalayim

29 Shevat
Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel,
the Alter of Slabodka

30 Shevat
Rabbi Meir,
the MaHaram of Padova





FROM THE TREASURY

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

Rabbi Chayim Pinto's Rebuke

Yitro's opportunity to advise Moshe Rabbeinu possibly stems from the fact that when he heard about the miracles and wonders Hashem did for Am Yisrael through Moshe His faithful servant, he immediately fortified his heart with complete faith in Hashem and His servant Moshe.

If so, it is a solemn obligation for every Jew to believe in the power of the righteous people that Hashem planted in every generation who have the capacity to effect salvation and bring about rescue and relief. As the verse says, "They trusted in G-d and in Moshe His servant." The Torah compares belief in Hashem to belief in Moshe's prophecy, to teach that one who believes in Moshe's words, in the righteous one of the generation, it is as if he believes in Hashem.

At the hilula celebration we arranged (in 5771) for the holy tzaddik and miracle worker, Rabbeinu Refael Pinto *zy"a*, I told the thousands of participants a wondrous story that occurred in the merit of the holy tzaddik. After the celebration, a dear Jew called Mr. Shlomo Moyal approached me and told me with much pain that a father and son sat next to him during my speech. The father showed disbelief in my story and told his son mockingly and derisively that such a story is impossible to have occurred. It is obviously irrational to believe it, and the whole story is nothing but a fantasy woven from a hyperactive imagination.

On the morrow of the celebration the father excitedly contacted Mr. Moyal and told him, "I must meet Rabbi David, *shlit"a*, urgently and beg heartfelt forgiveness for discrediting his words and expressing skepticism in the ability of the tzaddik."

Mr. Moyal demanded to know how he arrived at the conclusion that his attitude was wholly improper, and this is what he said:

"After the celebration, I returned home and went to bed. Rabbeinu Chayim Pinto *zy"a* appeared to me in a dream with his cane in hand and rebuked me irately for not being ashamed to be skeptical of the power of a tzaddik. Then Rabbeinu took his cane and began to beat me severely on my legs. I awoke from my sleep in terrible fright and immediately noticed signs of the dreadful blows I had suffered. I felt terrible pains, as if I had experienced the thrashing literally and not merely in a dream."

This is the penalty for someone whose faith in a tzaddik is weak. From here we learn how much caution is required in this area. Faith in the tzaddik is equal to faith in G-d. Just like Yitro and Bnei Yisrael believed in Hashem and Moshe His servant, so it is incumbent upon every Jew to strengthen themselves in complete and perfect faith in Hashem and His faithful servants who do His bidding.

May it be His will that the holy path of Yitro should be a guide for us. Just as he drew near to Hashem with all his might, so too we should draw close to fulfill His Torah and keep His commandments at all times, Amen.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

What will Mashiach Do with the New Train to Yerushalayim?

A practical query crossed the table of HaGaon Rabbi Yitzchak Silberstein *shlit"a*.

In the month of Tishri, masses began to travel on the new high-speed train to Yerushalayim and travel for the first three months was free. Unfortunately, the infrastructure work on the tracks was performed with blatant and disgraceful Shabbat desecration. The question: is it permitted to travel with such a train when its infrastructure was assembled through Shabbat desecration? Perhaps at this time, when the fares are free, it is permitted, because we are not paying them, whereas later it will be forbidden? On the other hand, maybe it is forbidden immediately and we have to wait to board the train an amount of time equal to all the Shabbatot they desecrated (as it states in halacha, if someone performs forbidden labor on Shabbat, one must wait after Shabbat the amount of time it took to do the forbidden labor before deriving benefit from it).

Harav Silberstein initially suggested that maybe there was room to be lenient in time of need because we do not know precisely the extent the desecrated Shabbatot assisted the project's speed of completion. It is possible that all the mishaps that occurred were due to having violated Shabbat.

"However," the Rav averred, "it is nevertheless proper for every G-d fearing individual to refrain from travelling on a train whose rails were assembled publicly on Shabbat. Such a person is careful to guard the word of Hashem and is the crown of creation."

In any case, we must be aware that it is a desecration of Hashem's Name when Shabbat is violated publicly and people remain unperturbed. Every journey needs Heavenly mercy and a train rider will need to say *Tefillat Haderech*. How can we ask for mercy from Hashem for a safe trip when the very tracks were put there through the disgraceful and public violation of Shabbat?

Regarding the rumours that the laying of the new tracks are somehow the "footsteps of the Mashiach," the Rav pointed out that **it is a gross error to think that constructing the train line to Yerushalayim is a sign of the approaching redemption! How is it possible to imagine that we will travel to our holy and glorious Bet Hamikdash on a train constructed by publicly violating Shabbat?! It is quite possible that when Mashiach will finally arrive to redeem us, these repulsive tracks will be destroyed** (*Kol Berama*, Kislev 5779).



PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

How Could Bnei Yisrael Eat on Yom Kippur?

“It came to pass on the morrow” (*Shemot* 18:13).

According to Rashi, “the morrow” refers to the day after Yom Kippur. Chazal find this idea difficult. If that is correct, then the day Moshe descended from Har Sinai, i.e. Yom Kippur, they went to greet his father-in-law. But about that day the Torah writes, “Yitro dedicated to Hashem an elevating offering and offerings to be eaten.” Therefore, they must have eaten on Yom Kippur. Since the Torah was already given, how could they possibly have eaten on Yom Kippur?!

Rabbi Yaakov Chagiz zt”l (*Halachot K’tanot* 2:135) explains that there was absolutely no place for self-affliction on that day. Chazal say (*Berachot* 8b) that one who eats and drinks on the 9th of Tishri is given the credit as if he had fasted on both the 9th and 10th, for preparation for a great matter is also considered as righteous.

Therefore, one must receive an awesome and monumental day like Yom Kippur with overwhelming joy, because of what is meant to be achieved on that very day. It is a day of atonement and there is no greater rejoicing than when we are immaculate before G-d.

That is why when they completed the building of the first Bet Hamikdash and the Altar, **they ate and rejoiced on Yom Kippur because they had already achieved atonement through its building** and by bringing *korbanot*. So too, on the Yom Kippur that Moshe Rabbeinu came down from Har Sinai with the Torah they surely did not fast, for who could tell them to fast. Also, on that very day HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe, “I have forgiven them as you requested.”

Not to be Alarmed by Difficulties in Learning

“They journeyed from Rephidim and came to the desert of Sinai and had encamped in the Wilderness; and there Yisrael encamped before the mount.” (*Shemot* 19:2).

The holy Or HaChayim writes that the Torah hints to us here about three main points of preparation for receiving the Torah:

- 1) **“They journeyed from Rephidim.”** We must leave the aspect of weakness behind. We must not learn Torah with laziness.
- 2) **“They encamped in the wilderness.”** We must study with humility, like a desert that everyone walks on.
- 3) **“There Yisrael encamped before the mount.”** “Encamped” is written in the Hebrew singular form. They encamped there like one man with one heart. We must study Torah in a group with geniality to each other.

When the holy Or HaChayim discusses laziness in the study of Torah, he explains that such an attitude does not only adversely affect the quantity by learning less material, it also unfavorably impacts the quality of the Torah he has already studied. Just as bad weeds damage a field, so laziness damages and causes a loss in the attainment of Torah knowledge.

The holy Or HaChaim reminds us here of what he wrote in his holy sefer *Chefetz Hashem*. There are those who seek to learn Torah in a superficial manner or to study easier material, or when they encounter a difficult topic they lose the patience to dwell upon it because they do not want to strain their body or intellect. The Torah becomes for them a poison for just as they seek to spare themselves the exertion of toiling in the study of Torah, measure for measure, their bodies become weak with sicknesses, may Hashem save us.

This is the meaning of the verse, “You shall not make Me into gods of silver and gold,” gods who cannot see and hear.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

To Feel the Pain of Another

When someone comes to me, presents his distressful situation and requests a blessing for Divine assistance from me, I try to imagine myself in his position and feel as if his pain is my own, personal pain. In this way my prayer on his behalf wells up from the depths of my heart and I pray fervently for salvation and mercy for him, in the merit of my holy ancestors.

Once, when I was in Lyon, France, a woman turned to me for help. She was pregnant with twins. She recounted to me, crying and in pain, that the doctors strongly suggested that she abort the fetuses because of the danger facing them and her.

She added that the fetuses were not progressing properly. However, providentially she did not emphasize to me the extent of the terrible danger the doctors prognosticated. I innocently thought the danger was not so immediate and real. Therefore, I instructed her to ignore the doctors’ opinions and not abort.

Six months of pregnancy passed and only then was I given to realize how enormous the danger to the woman was. However, by then it was too late to do anything about it. When I realized what the situation was, I contacted her and told her that she should put her trust in Hashem and remove all worry from her heart. With Hashem’s help she would experience incredible salvation.

How awesome was her faith in Hashem! With Hashem’s kindness He accepted our prayers. She gave birth to healthy twins, free of any birth defect, against all the gloomy predictions of the doctors. Understandably, there was a fantabulous Kiddush Hashem.

Also in this case, when she had originally told me of her dire predicament, I felt a huge pain in my heart as if this difficulty was affecting one of my own household, as if she was my wife or daughter, G-d forbid. With this heartfelt feeling, I presented my prayer before the Creator from the depths of my heart and beseeched Him to save her quickly. Blessed be His Glorious Name! She merited salvation and mercy.

We should all try to join in the sorry plight of our friends and sympathizing with their pain. This is the attribute of unity, feeling like one man with one heart. We should help and assist our friends for we are all children of Hashem our Father.



MEN OF FAITH

The Sale

A Moroccan Jew owed the government a large sum of money. After repeated warnings from the government to pay his debt immediately, it was decided to impound his house.

This was scheduled to happen on Friday. On Thursday, the man lit a candle for the merit of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's soul. He prayed to Hashem from the depths of his heart that in the merit of the tzaddik he should find a buyer for his house immediately, for then the government would not be able to confiscate it since it would no longer belong to him.

The merit of Rabbi Chaim stood in his stead. Barely an hour afterward, a serious customer arrived at his house and ended up buying it for the full price. Thus, the government could not impound the house on Friday.

If the government would have seized possession of the house, they would have auctioned it off at a cheap price. It was a miracle that he was able to sell the house before the government seized it. This way he was able to receive the full value of the house. He quickly paid his debt and was even left with a substantial

amount of money for himself. This was all in the merit of the tzaddik.

Safe Landing

A man who was afraid of flying was once traveling by plane from Montreal to Miami on business. Suddenly, the pilot ordered all the passengers to buckle their seatbelts since there was a storm in Miami with heavy rain, thunder, and strong winds. The situation was perilous.

The man was very frightened and began to pray to Hashem that the plane should land safely in the merit of the holy tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan. In the end, the plane landed successfully.

The man relates that after the landing, the pilot announced in amazement, "I cannot understand how I managed to land safely. I was informed by the control tower that there was a problem, and I myself noticed the danger. However, suddenly all the danger signals disappeared, as if there had been no problem at all."

This is the power of faith. What a pilot cannot do, an ordinary Jew can accomplish with simple faith and prayer.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Place Influences the Person

"They went into the tent. Moshe related to his father-in-law all that Hashem had done" (*Shemot* 18:7-8).

The Midrash says that Moshe brought Yitro to the Bet Hamidrash to draw him close to Torah.

Why did Moshe need to relate the miracles to Yitro specifically in the Bet Hamidrash?

There are two solutions to this question:

- 1) A holy place has the greatest influence. Saying holy things in a holy place will cause them to seep deep into Yitro's consciousness.
- 2) Moshe brought Yitro into the Bet Hamidrash and told him everything that Hashem had done for them. Thereby he wanted to teach Yitro that these stories are not just historical accounts but they are themselves real Torah!



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

Leaving the Path of Tzniut

Similar to *rechilus*, *avak rechilus* is also forbidden. An example could be if Reuven tells Shimon what Levi said about him, even if it is not something truly disparaging but just something people are generally not excited to have said about them in their presence.

Similarly, if Reuven confides in Shimon, Shimon must keep the information secret. Even if there is absolutely nothing derogatory about the information, a secret may not be shared since divulging it to others may be damaging to Reuven and might cause a disruption of his plans. This is a departure from the path of *tzniut* and goes against Reuven's wishes, even if he did not explicitly state that Shimon should keep it a secret.

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