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maskil Le'David

Emunah Leads to Yirat Shamayim

“Now, O Israel, what does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your G-d, to go in all His ways and to love Him” (Devarim 10:12).

“Only to fear” – Rashi clarifies these words: “Our Sages expound from here, ‘Everything is in the Hands of Heaven, besides for fear of Heaven.’”

Moshe told the Bnei Yisrael that everything Hashem requests from them is dependent on *yirat Shamayim* (fear of G-d), and once they acquire *yirat Shamayim*, they will be successful in acquiring all other qualities. The Gemara (*Berachot* 32b) asks: “Is fear of Heaven a small matter and something easy to achieve?” From the way in which Moshe addressed Bnei Yisrael it appears that *yirat Shamayim* is easy to acquire. Yet, our Sages tell us, “Everything is in the Hands of Heaven besides fear of Heaven.” The Gemara answers that, indeed, for Moshe Rabbeinu *yirat Shamayim* was something easy and simple to achieve, and this is why he addressed Bnei Yisrael using that implication.

The Gemara’s answer is difficult to understand. Although it was easy for Moshe to achieve *yirat Shamayim*, in this *passuk* he was addressing Bnei Yisrael who were not on his level. Why did he not address them using language that was appropriate for them?

All of a person’s desires – for example finding a spouse, ample income, health, marital harmony, *nachat* from one’s children, success and blessings – lie in Hashem’s Hand. Concerning finding one’s spouse we are told (*Sotah* 2a): “[Finding] one’s destined spouse is as difficult as the splitting of the sea.” Just as when Bnei Yisrael were standing by the water’s edge with the Egyptians close behind them, Hashem saved His people and split the sea, so too when seeking one’s spouse, it is Hashem Himself who splits one’s personal sea, eliminates all his challenges and presents him with his designated marriage partner.

Referring to a person’s income, Chazal tell us

(*Pesachim* 118a, *Avodah Zara* 3b) that Hashem sustains and provides for every single being – “From the horns of *re’eimim* to the eggs of lice.” We are also told, (*Tehillim* 55:23): “Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you.” Even though it appears that the extent of our income is due to our own power, talents and effort, this is not the case. It is Hashem alone who determines whether a person will have *parnassah* in abundance or will struggle financially.

I am familiar with many people who were extremely wealthy yet suddenly lost all their assets. On the other hand, I know many people who were extremely poor and struggled to put bread on the table, yet unexpectedly the wheel turned and a large sum of money fell into their laps. If we were to try to give this phenomenon a rational or natural explanation, we would not be successful. There is no logical rationalization for this chain of events. This brings us to the conclusion that the key to *parnassah* is in Hashem’s Hands.

When we require a cure for an illness, we pray to Hashem, “Heal us, Hashem – then we will be healed; save us – then we will be saved,” since the key to life and healing is in Hashem’s Hands alone and He is the One decides whether or not the sick person will recover from his illness. This is true with every area in life. Every occurrence is determined by Hashem who created the world, besides *yirat Shamayim* which is dependent on a person’s efforts and desire. This being the case, we need to understand how, when Moshe told Bnei Yisrael that Hashem only asks of them to fear Him, the expression he used implies that achieving the special quality of *yirat Shamayim* is a simple matter.

The following idea suggests an answer to this difficulty. Immediately upon awakening in the morning, a person must recite the Modeh Ani prayer: “I gratefully thank You, O living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul within me with compassion – abundant is Your faithfulness!”

This recitation is a confirmation that when we fall asleep at night, our soul goes up to Heaven and is deposited in Hashem’s Hands, and out of His mercy and compassion for us, He returns it to us in the morning.

cont. p. 4. >>>

27 Av 5784

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Re'eh

Shabbat Mevarchin



Hilula

27 Av

Rabbi Yehuda Moshe Patiah

28 Av

Rabbi Avraham Chaim Ades

29 Av

Rabbi Ya'akov Bardugo,
author of *Shufreh D'Yaakov*

30 Av

Rabbi Chamani Alush

1 Elul

Rabbi David Hanaggid

2 Elul

Rabbi Yitzchak Bar Sheshet

3 Elul

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak
HaKohen Kook





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Annulling the Bad Days

“See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse” (*Devarim* 11:26).

The word “היום – today” appears superfluous. Could the verse not have just said, “See, I present before you a blessing and a curse”?

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel, zy”a, in his *sefer Ben Ish Chai*, explains:

Hashem gave Am Yisrael five festival days: Rosh Hashana, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, the first day of Pesach and the festival of Shavuot.

If Am Yisrael were to observe these five festival days as they should be, they would be saved from five bad days: The fast of Gedalya, the Tenth of Tevet, the Seventeenth of Tammuz, Tisha B’Av and the Tenth of Av (as we know, the majority of the Beit Hamikdash was burnt on the tenth of Av).

This is the meaning of the verse: “See, I present before you today (היום).” “ה-יום” refers to the five days (the letter ה has the numerical value of five). There are five days that are a blessing and a curse. If you are careful with the five festival days, which allude to blessing, you will be protected from the five ‘bad’ days, which symbolize curse.

Qualities are Inherited

“You shall not eat it, in order that it be well with you and your children after you” (*Devarim* 12:25).

It is told that a non-Jewish researcher of the Tanach once approached Rabbi Yonatan Eibeshitz and asked him:

Why specifically regarding the transgression of eating blood, does the Torah add the blessing, “In order that it be well with you and your children”?

Rabbi Yonatan answered him: The Torah forbids eating blood since it blocks the heart and implants the trait of cruelty in a person, and, as we know, the trait of cruelty is inherited by one’s children.

This then is the implication of, “You shall not it, in order that it will be well with you and your children after you.” Do not eat blood so that both you and your children will possess a refined soul without a tendency to cruelty.

Not All Fingers Are Equal

“If there shall be a destitute person among you, any of your brethren in any of your cities, in your Land that Hashem, your G-d, gives you, you shall not harden your heart or close your hand against your destitute brother” (*Devarim* 15:7).

Later, the Torah details how we should behave toward the destitute brother:

“Rather, you shall open your hand to him; you shall lend him his requirement, whatever is lacking to him” (*ibid.* v.8).

The Vilna Gaon explains that the Torah is alluding to the correct conduct when giving charity:

If a person bends his fingers, all of them look equal, whereas if his hand is open, one can see that this is not really true – each finger is a different size.

Our Sages explain the words “whatever is lacking to him” to mean that the poor person must be given even a horse to ride on and a servant to run before him if this is what he was used to. We must provide for each person according to his honor and importance. Great consideration is required in order to understand the difference between each person’s individual requirements.

This is the implication of the words: “...you shall not... close your hand” – when the hand is closed and the fingers are bent, they all look equal. Rather, we are commanded, “...you shall open your hand.” Once you do this you will see that not all fingers are equal. This teaches us that we must be perceptive and discern the difference between each poor person and his needs.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Yirat Shamayim can Be Acquired with Ease

Some time ago, one of the *talmidim* we merited returning to Jewish observance, became engaged to a young lady who was far from mitzvah observance. I told the *talmid* that this will definitely affect his marriage, since the fact that his intended does not observe mitzvot and lacks *yirat Shamayim*, is a sure recipe for arguments and lack of marital harmony. I requested that the *talmid* send his bride to a seminar so she could sample a taste of Torah, after which we could reconsider if she is truly a fitting partner for him.

We also decided that his bride would be a guest at my home for two Shabbatot, during which I would be able to ascertain if she is open to change and the idea of coming closer to Jewish observance.

On that first Shabbat, I made Kiddush, sang *zemirot*, danced a bit with the children and told over Torah thoughts from the weekly *parshah*. A normal Shabbat *se’udah*.

Suddenly I noticed that the bride’s eyes were suspiciously bright and tears were falling down her cheeks. She sighed and exclaimed, “How sweet is the Torah!”

Later on in the *se’udah*, I noticed that she was very moved. Indeed, she turned to me and asked, “Is this Judaism?” She explained that until now she imagined that a Rav is a stern person who does not know how to sing and relates to his children in a firm manner. Yet now she understood that this was completely incorrect.

I told this young lady that outside of my house, I conduct myself with nobility and dignity as is fitting for a Rav, for this shows honor to the Torah that I try to spread. However, in my own home I am first and foremost “Abba,” a father who must be kind and gentle to his children if he wishes to impart the Torah’s message to them. This is the way the Torah guides parents to relate to their children.

At the end of the *se’udah*, she told me that she is praying to Hashem, asking Him to forgive her for all her sins. As soon as Shabbat departed, she expressed the desire to change her wardrobe and begin dressing modestly.

This story, in its great simplicity, demonstrated to me how *yirat Shamayim* can indeed be acquired with ease. It is solely dependent on a person’s desire and sincerity.

Since this young lady possessed the desire to understand, one Shabbat was enough of a catalyst for her to change her lifestyle.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Who is Victorious?

“And you will take possession from them and settle in their land” (*Devarim* 12:29).

There were times when the Jewish people faced bitter challenges to their faith, when the winds of heresy blew strongly and caused many casualties... However, in our generation there are no true atheists. In our times, there are only two kinds of people: believers or fools. Anyone who has even a bit of intelligence cannot be an atheist. The existence of an Omnipresent is so clear, it is impossible to deny it!

We live among three hundred million non-Jews who possess a deep desire to annihilate us. With the biological and chemical weapons that they possess, they are capable of wiping out the entire country in two and half hours at most. Yet in fact, what happens? They sit quietly and do almost nothing. What explanation can there be for this, besides Divine Providence which guards and protects us from our enemies?

The only reason we still exist is because we have a loving and compassionate Father who watches over us! Entire empires were established and fell, but the Jewish people have remained on the platform of history! Is there any rational explanation for this, besides the magnificent Divine Intervention that we merit from the King of Kings? In order to come to this realization, there is no need for a leap of faith. We need only to open our eyes and not disregard the facts!

Rabbeinu Tam writes in *Sefer Hayashar* that an *apikoros* (heretic) who denies the existence of the Creator can be compared to an animal who cries out with his head facing the ground: “The heavens do not exist!” What is our retort? “Animal, just pick up your head and you will see that there is a heaven!”

We who live here in Eretz Yisrael are used to war, but can we say about any war that took place in this country from the year 5708, that the fighting and victory followed a natural course? In 5708, six hundred thousand Jews faced the hostility of all the Western countries, yet

nevertheless emerged victorious. Can this be considered a natural outcome?!

In those days, Tel Aviv was home to an angel in the guise of a man, the Admor of Belz, zt”l. His entire existence was unnatural – he neither ate nor drank and hardly slept.

When his doctor once came to examine him, he noted his extreme weakness. On completing his examination, the doctor declared that he was not suffering from any specific ailment – his extreme weakness was purely a result of a lack of nutrition. He therefore ordered him to partake of a nutritious meal and drink an adequate amount of liquids.

What did the Admor do? He asked his *gabbaim* to prepare a substantial meal, exactly as the doctor had ordered, for how could he go against the doctor’s orders? As soon as he was informed that the meal, which included fish, meat, soup, and even compote, was ready, he called over two *bachurim* and in a straightforward manner told them: “The doctor ordered me to eat a satisfying meal for the sake of my health, but I am not capable of eating so much food. Since our holy Sages teach that a person’s messenger is considered like the person himself, I order you to be my messengers, and consume this meal instead of me!”

This was Rabbi Aharon, the Admor of Belz! Literally an angel in the guise of a person!

Indeed, during one of the wars, the Admor remained standing in his place all day until the war ended! This was a person who could normally hardly stand on his feet; he had to be wheeled from room to room. Yet he stood on his feet, without moving, for an entire twenty-four hours, and prayed! Do we now comprehend in whose merit we earned the miraculous victory? Do we have any doubt? Not in the merit of the tanks and planes, but in the merit of the Admor of Belz and other similar righteous individuals, who, with their merits, protected the nation that dwells in Tzion!

FROM THE TREASURY



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

Observing Mitzvot in Eretz Yisrael Is Priceless

The Divine Providence that is exclusive to Eretz Yisrael is unceasing and exists forever. It is the Land about which we are told, “The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the year’s end” (*Devarim* 11:12). Hashem’s eyes are constantly on the Land, from the beginning of the year, which refers to Rosh Hashanah, until the very last day of the year.

The reason for this is that in comparison to all other countries, Eretz Yisrael is unique in its great holiness. There are also certain mitzvot that can be performed only in Eretz Yisrael, for example, taking *trumot* and *ma’asrot* (tithing), appointing a king and *bikkurim*. Those who live outside of Eretz Yisrael cannot fulfill these mitzvot. In the merit of these mitzvot, Eretz Yisrael has a unique holiness. This is in addition to the constant Divine Providence that the Land merits.

The holy *sefarim* mention that a person has 248 limbs and 365 sinews, which correspond to the 613 mitzvot. This being the case, each person is a living Sefer Torah, with every limb in his body corresponding to a different mitzvah of the Torah. Since the mitzvot that are dependent on Eretz Yisrael are also part of the 613 mitzvot, this means that there are limbs in a person’s body that correspond to these mitzvot. In light of this, we can say that when a person lives in a foreign country and cannot fulfill the mitzvot that are dependent on Eretz Yisrael, his body is lacking something.

On the other hand, if a Jew lives in the Holy Land and fulfills all the mitzvot, including those dependent on the Land, his body becomes complete with Torah and mitzvot. Although we no longer have a Beit Hamikdash and, therefore, cannot fulfill some of the mitzvot, a person who longs for the building of the Beit Hamikdash is rewarded for these mitzvot.

The *yetzer hara*, with his cunning wisdom, realizes the importance of the mitzvah of living in Eretz Yisrael and the great advantage that one can attain through keeping all the mitzvot that are dependent on the Land. Therefore, he tries in every way possible to place stumbling blocks in a person’s path to prevent him from having the opportunity of sanctifying his body through fulfilling all the mitzvot in the Torah.

ZECHER TZADDIK LIYRACHA



The Memory of a Tzaddik Should Be for a Blessing

In honor of the hilula of Maran Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, zy" a – father of our esteemed master HaGaon HaTzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita – which falls on the fifth of Elul, we will unveil a few precious diamonds from the treasury of the tzaddik's *middot* and holy ways.

Each generation of the distinguished Pinto family is another shining jewel in the crown of this illustrious family. Father and son, generation following generation, all possessed the highest levels of faith and were exceptionally holy and pious servants of Hashem. HaTzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon, is one of the magnificent links in the succession of outstanding *talmidei chachamim* who merited to perform wonders, brought salvation to many and protected Am Yisrael with the splendor of their holiness and purity. Rabbi Moshe Aharon was particularly famous for his unassuming manner in serving Hashem, and for his extraordinary undertaking to seclude himself in his home for forty years, at the behest of his father, HaTzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a. During this time, he devoted himself to Torah study with a diligence that is unfathomable to the human mind. Closeted in the four walls of his small room and devoid of any connection to the outside world, he ascended in levels of holiness and purity. With a holy passion to soar in his *avodat Hashem*, he paid no attention to his physical and material needs.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon was blessed with an outstanding humility and his glow was felt by all those with whom he came into contact. Standing in his presence felt like being in the presence of a lofty and exalted

personality who, despite being head and shoulders above the rest of his generation, was able to lower himself to bear the pain and concern of all those created in the image of G-d. Anyone wishing to enter his home was welcomed with a special warmth at any time of day.

Rabbi Moshe Aharon possessed great faith in Hashem Yitbarach. The verse, "Cast upon Hashem your burden and He will sustain you" was his guiding light at every juncture and the principle upon which he calculated his every step, to the extent that he paid no attention to the mundane matters of this world. Rabbi Moshe Aharon spent his days and nights secluded in his home, sitting close to the candles that he lit in memory of his holy ancestors, while occupying himself with Torah and good deeds.

In his modest home, he received all those who turned to him for help. Nobody was turned away. Both men and women were welcome. He was most particularly not to pick up his eyes to see who was entering his room, yet despite this custom he was able to discern the purpose of each person's visit, and knew whether they had come to request a blessing, ask his advice, or request that he pray for the recovery of a dear one. His meticulousness in guarding his eyes is proved by the fact that even when his wife or daughters would enter the room, he would start to bless them with the traditional blessing of *mi sheberach*, and only when he paused to hear the name, did he suddenly realize that the one standing opposite him was actually one of his close family members!

Although we have mentioned a particular remarkable aspect of his conduct in the past, it is worth repeating due to its importance: his scrupulousness in guarding his eyes. The concept of guarding one's eyes is mentioned time and again in our holy *sefarim*, and is accorded great significance. Our Sages teach us that the foremost holiness and purity of a person, begins with his eyes. One who protects his eyes so as not to gaze at forbidden sights, merits achieving true fear of G-d. The tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Aharon was most particular about this matter, and even though he was exposed to thousands of people who arrived at his home in search of his blessings, he was nevertheless extremely careful not to look at women. Even when his wife, the Rabbanit Mazal, a" h, entered the room, the tzaddik did not pick up his eyes and only realized who it was once she "introduced" herself!

With his prayers he moved worlds in order to bring down protection for the holy nation of Israel. With his holy spirit, he was able to grasp the future, and would beseech his holy, righteous ancestors to advocate for Am Yisrael and send them salvation and annul any bad decrees.

On the day of the hilula which falls on the fifth of Elul, throngs of people will visit Rabbi Moshe Aharon's final resting place – his righteous children, family members and devoted students, together with many of Am Yisrael who merited experiencing salvation and mercy in his merit. During his lifetime and even after his passing, he has been the conduit for incredible salvation for all those who prayed before the One who dwells on High.

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Declaring one's gratitude every single morning serves to sharpen our awareness and understanding that Hashem is the One who created us with wisdom, insight and discernment, and therefore all that happens to a person and all the actions he performs, are all decided by Hashem. This is exactly what the prophet Yirmiyahu conveys in the verse, "They are new every morning, great is Your faithfulness!" (*Eichah* 3:23). When a person's soul is returned to him in the morning, this immediately renews his faith that it is Hashem, in His compassion, who returns his soul to him.

Since we recite the Modeh Ani prayer on a daily basis, the frequent repetition can cloud our senses and weaken our awe. But if we step back for a moment and contemplate how we merited the return of our souls after a night of sleep, which is considered one sixtieth of death, this will serve to heighten our faith in Hashem and our love of Him.

When a person develops his faith in Hashem, that faith brings him to *yirat Shamayim* which is in fact fear of sin. Contemplating our soul's journey strengthens our faith, which in turn arouses fear of G-d, and in turn leads to cultivate our *yirat Shamayim*, it is fitting for us to recite the Modeh Ani prayer every morning with great intensity and consider the implication of the words. This idea is indeed something simple and easy. Consequently, Moshe Rabbeinu was correct in telling Bnei Yisrael that *yirat Shamayim* is a virtue that can be acquired easily.



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

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