

Ki Teitzei

August 22nd 2026
9th of Elul 5786

1178

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik 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"a

MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Success in Chinuch is Contingent on Personal Example

"If a person will have a wayward and rebellious son" (Devarim 21:18)

Our Sages zt"l (Sanhedrin 71a) tell us that there never was and never will be a capital case involving such a son. So why is it written in the Torah? "Expound and receive reward". These are the words of the gemarah, which require an explanation.

Chazal tell us (Avot 1:17) "Not study, but practice is the main thing". If in this case there is no practical application and the law will never be observed, what is the purpose in expounding on it?

In order to clarify this, we will first explain the severity of the sin of the wayward son. We must understand why his sin is so unbearably great to the extent that our Sages tell us (Sanhedrin 72a), "He is judged according to his eventual behavior. The Torah understands the underlying intentions of the wayward son, who eventually finishes his father's resources and tries to find what he is used to and doesn't find, therefore he goes out to the crossroads and robs people, therefore the Torah tells us that it is better that he should die innocent than guilty".

This seems difficult to understand. Just because he ate and drank more than his customary amount – a large measure of meat and half a lug of wine, the Torah is certain that when he grows up he will exhibit corrupt standards, falling to the level of robbing people? Can eating meat and drinking wine to an excess bring a person to such terrible atrocities? Why, if so, is the Torah so stringent and instructs to kill him by stoning?

The 'Mishnat Ahron' quotes the Ramban in order to clarify this question. "Since he is a glutton he transgresses the commandment of (Vayikra 19:2) "Be holy", in addition to the commandment of (Devarim 13:5) "Him shall you serve and to Him shall you cleave", where we are commanded to know Hashem in all our ways, and one who is a glutton and drunkard does not know the way of Hashem". This means that the Torah is not particular on the meat that he ate and the wine that he drank – but that his deeds prove that he has left the way of Hashem which is the way of the Torah, and chose a new way for himself, one of corruption and self-gratification. The Torah knows with certainty that if he were to continue on this path, when he grows up he will become corrupt and rob people and murder and if so it is better for him that he should die innocent rather than guilty.

We now understand that his core sin is that he chooses the pleasures of this world and self-indulgence as his main direction in life, because he enjoys a life devoid of obligations and wants to live a life of freedom without boundaries and restraints. Naturally, the Torah forbids this way of life because although a person is permitted to enjoy the pleasures of this world, it has to be in a

limited and defined way and with the condition that his goal is the appropriate purpose. When he eats and drinks he should intend that his body be healthy and strong to serve Hashem. And when he goes to sleep his intention should be to regain his strength and awaken in the morning like a lion to serve his Creator.

But the wayward son seizes the pleasures of this world as his goal and purpose. He requests life only in order to enjoy and corrupt himself with self-indulgence and submerge himself in worldly pleasures. The Torah understands that if he is unable to immediately gratify his cravings, he will have no second thoughts about murdering others if this will enable him to achieve his wishes and fulfill his desires and therefore "it is better that he should die innocent rather than guilty".

If the son fell to such a terrible level of corruption, there is no doubt that the parents are guilty and the noose is hanging on their necks. Had they started educating him from a young age in the good and straight way, in the path of Torah and mitzvot, he surely would not have reached such a sharp decline in spirituality by choosing a life of frivolity and abandonment. As the passuk says (Mishlei 22:6) "Educate the lad according to his way so that even when he grows older he will not deviate from it".

In order to be a good educator and to teach ones children the way of Hashem, there is no need for excessive explanations because the main thing is one's personal example. When a child sees his father behaving correctly, according to the ways of mussar and good middot, there is no better chinuch than this.

But how foolish are those parents whose deeds do not correspond to their words. They demand of their children a certain approach, while they themselves do the exact opposite. There is no possibility that these parents will be successful in educating their children and all their reprimands will not help their children to improve their ways, because the stubbornness of the children will help them remain firm and they will never defer to their parents authority. And they are justified! How can a parent think that he has the right to demand from his child to perform a certain deed when he himself does the exact opposite?

On the other hand, if the parents were smart enough to educate their children while they were still young, then as they grow older they will still be able to influence them and direct them on the right path. But if in their formative years the parents allowed them the freedom to behave as they see fit and to do whatever they please, when the children grow up the parents will be surprised to see that they have produced spoilt fruit and suddenly now they are interested in educating and guiding them in the correct way – but they will definitely have lost the chance and will not succeed.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

9 – Rabbi Tzadok HaCohen of Lublin

10 – Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller

11 – Rabbi Shalom Yosef of Ruzhin

12 – Rabbi Ahron Alkasalsi zya"a

13 – Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel zya"a

14 – Rabbi Mordechai Birdugo

15 – Rabbi Amram Ben Divan



Walking in their Ways

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

How the gas leak was discovered

When I was on a visit to New York, I needed a large sum of money for charity purposes. In an act of Divine intervention, I met Mr. Kadi. He is a wonderful man, who generously donates tzedakah and hurries to help me whenever I turn to him. I asked him now, as well, to make a sizeable contribution to the cause I was rallying. Mr. Kadi did not disappoint me and donated a handsome sum.

But I wanted him to contribute of his own goodwill, not out of a sense of coercion or force. I put forth a short prayer that Hashem should put the right words in my mouth. Baruch Hashem, my prayer was accepted. This was how it happened:

Mr. Kadi told me about the new home he had just built. He asked that I bless him in the merit of my fathers that nothing bad should happen to his house. There should be no ayin hara upon it, and he should dwell in it peacefully. I instructed him to check out all the gas lines before moving in.

He answered immediately, "Honored Rav, I checked out everything. The gas system is built in the most superior way possible."

But I was adamant. "Do not move in until you dig up the gas lines and check that they are all in order."

When he saw that I was unwavering, he finally relented and agreed to do whatever I said.

About two days later, Mr. Kadi returned to me. He was so excited that he could hardly speak. Finally, he calmed down enough to relate the following:

"Honored Rav, I have no words to thank you. Had I not checked out the gas lines like you recommended, the entire house would have exploded! During the first investigation, everything seemed in order. But after the Rav instructed me to do another search, I called other engineers, with more advanced electronic equipment. They checked out the system more thoroughly and found a leak in an underground gas pipe. Had we not discovered it in time, it would have posed a definite hazard to the entire house and its occupants."

I lifted my hands heavenward and thanked Hashem for guiding me to say what I did. I was grateful to be the channel through which Mr. Kadi and his family were rescued from danger.

After this harrowing incident, Mr. Kadi wished to demonstrate his gratitude to his Creator. He donated the respectable sum I had previously specified, with a willing heart.

Since I needed Heavenly assistance to cause Mr. Kadi to donate of his own goodwill, I merited giving him a good piece of advice.

When a person is in need of siyata di'Shemaya, Hashem will come to his assistance. Hashem has thousands of ways of helping people out of their predicament. All that is left for us to do is turn to Him and ask for His help.



Words of our Sages

The importance of observing the prohibition of shatnez.

"You shall not wear combined fibers, wool and linen together" (Devarim 22:11)

The prohibition to wear shatnez is one of the Torah commandments that do not have a rational explanation. Nevertheless, the 'Chizkuni' offers an inspiring rationale:

Due to the famous offerings of Cain and Abel, where Cain offered flax seeds (linen) from the poorer portion of his crop while Abel brought from the finest of his flock (wool) and this resulted in a disaster, these two items were prohibited from being combined.

The Zohar Hakadosh adds that until today the impact of the deeds of Cain exists in the world, and one who wears a garment containing a combination of wool and linen awakens the same spirit and causes himself harm. This is the spirit of 'satan oz', a play on the word 'shatnez', because shatnez brought murder to the world!

Besides the inherent prohibition, wearing shatnez causes a person to be scrutinized with harsh judgment, and even on Yom Kippur, a day when Satan does not accuse, he may indict one who wears shatnez.

This idea is explained by Rabbeinu Yehonatan Eibishitz zt"l, who expounds on the words of the 'Tur' (Laws of Yom Kippur 604) concerning the mitzva of eating on erev Yom Kippur. The Tur quotes a story from the Midrash about an officer who sent his servant to buy fish. The servant inquired throughout the market and came upon only a single fish. He paid one gold coin for it, when suddenly a Jewish tailor appeared and offered a higher price. The servant was prepared to pay a larger sum but the Jew did not let up and continued to raise the price, until he was ready to pay five gold coins! The servant was hesitant to pay this enormous sum so he returned to his master, ashamed and empty handed. When the officer heard the story he, called for the Jewish tailor and asked him what he does for a living. The man replied, "I am a simple tailor." "And how do you have the means to pay five gold coins for a fish that is worth one gold coin? And besides, you took it from my servant whom I sent to buy fish?" The Jew replied with a question, "How could I not buy fish? I would even be prepared to pay ten gold coins so that I can eat on the eve of this holy day, when we are certain that Hashem will forgive us for all our sins." "If so, you did the right thing", the officer answered and sent him back home.

Rabbi Yehonatan Eibishitz asks: Why does this story stress the profession of the tailor? Had he been a poor shoemaker would the officer not have let him go free? But, that tailor was a tzaddik and he was particular that the clothes he sewed contained no trace of shatnez. Since the letters of the word 'shatnez' can be re-arranged to read 'satan-oz', it is a lesson that if one transgresses the prohibition of wearing shatnez, the satan has the power to accuse him even on Yom Kippur. Therefore the Midrash points out that that this Jewish tailor felt great happiness on Yom Kippur, since he was particular in this mitzva, and was sure that he would merit complete atonement for his sins on this special day...

The Haftarah

"Sing out, O barren one who has not given birth"

(Yeshaya54:1)

The connection to this Shabbat: This haftarah is part of the seven consecutive haftarot of comfort read on the seven Shabbatot following Tishah B'Av.

Ashkenazim have the custom to continue reading with the next chapter "O afflicted, storm-tossed one, who has not been consoled".



Guard Your Tongue

It is forbidden to reveal

If someone commits an improper act and Reuven asks Shimon who the perpetrator was, even if Shimon feels that Reuven suspects that he is the guilty one, he is forbidden to reveal who the real perpetrator was, even if he witnessed the act himself. His reply should only be: "I did not do it".



Chazak U'Baruch

The common perception is that Chodesh Elul, the month of mercy and forgiveness, is a time that is conducive for repentance and drawing close to Hashem. This is how Chazal explain the words, "Ani le'dodi v'dodi li", "I am for my beloved and my beloved is for Me". The sefer 'Hazchut', authored by the Chidushei Harim of Gur zt"l, adds another aspect. He writes that in Chodesh Elul the neshamot of the tzaddikim from the Dor Hamidbar come to assist every Jew to repent and come closer to his Creator.

The Rebbe of Gur zt"l tells the following story that is brought in the sefer "Shivchei Ha'Ari". The Ari zt"l was once sitting in his house surrounded by his talmidim, when Rabbi Shmuel Uzidah, then a young bachur, (he later authored the sefer 'Midrash Shmuel' on Pirkei Avot) came to speak to the Rav about a certain matter. When the Rav zt"l noticed that he came inside, he stood up and said "Welcome". He took him by the hand, sat him down next to him and spoke to him at length and only then Rabbi Shmuel left.

The honorable Rabbi Chaim Vital zt"l turned to the Ari HaKadosh and said, "I cannot refrain from asking my honorable Rebbe why he rose for the bachur and said "Welcome". This is not my Rebbe's usual practice?"

He replied: "By your life, not for this young man did I get up, and not to him did I say welcome, but I was honoring Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir, who entered together with him, above his head. Because he performed a mitzvah that Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir used to perform, his neshama clothed this bachur today to help him and assist him in this mitzvah. And this is the secret: "One who tries to purify himself, heaven helps him (Yuma 38b). As soon as a person entertains the idea of performing a great mitzvah, the neshama of a tzaddik who used to run after this mitzvah is embedded inside him, and with this the person has the strength to fulfill the mitzvah correctly. And if not for this, the evil inclination would win over the person and persuade him not to do the mitzvah".

When Moreinu Rabbi Chaim heard the words of the Rav, he got up and ran after Rabbi Shmuel and asked him, "I demand that you tell me which mitzvah you performed, for this is what the Rav told me".

Rabbi Shmuel replied, "By your life, the mitzvah that I performed today was that early this morning I got up and went to shul to pray. On the way I passed a house and heard the sound of crying coming from that direction. I decided to go inside and see why they were crying. I saw all of them standing naked, because thieves had come in the night and stole all their belongings, even taking their clothes off their backs. I immediately felt great pity for them and took off my outer garment and gave it to the father. Afterwards I returned home and put on my Shabbat garment; you can see with your own eyes that I am wearing Shabbat clothes."

Rabbi Chaim immediately kissed him and returned to his Rebbe to tell him the story. The Ari zt"l said: "That is indeed what happened, and in the merit of this mitzvah he merited to be clothed with the neshama of Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir because he used to redeem the imprisoned (Chulin 7,71), and also performed chessed with the unfortunate and dejected.

The Chidushei Harim finished: From this it seems that every time a person performs a mitzvah, neshamot from the higher world, who used to occupy themselves in their lifetime with that mitzvah, come and assist the person. Like when a person does kindness in the proper way, Avraham Avinu a"h joins him. Similarly, when a person davens the three tefillot of the day which were each arranged by one of the avot, they in turn come and help a person"

Treasures

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



One who admits and leaves (the sin) ~ will be treated with mercy

Man knows clearly that on Rosh Hashana he will need to stand before the King of the world and give an exact accounting of all his deeds. He innocently thinks that he does need to improve or correct any area of his behavior and in his ignorance it seems to him that he is worthy and ready for the judgment. He is certain that his righteousness will shine out and his numerous good deeds will compensate for any bad deeds. He does not realize the painful truth that in fact he has many sins, even serious ones, and woe to him if he will arrive in this state to the Day of Judgment. But his pride blinds him and prevents him from taking a step back to seriously consider his ways which would enable him to acknowledge his bad deeds.

The appropriate way is that during this month a person should search his deeds and make a reckoning. If he indeed finds impurities in his heart and his deeds are found wanting – he should immediately confess his sins and plead for atonement before Hashem and ask for His forgiveness and fully repent. "One who admits and leaves (the sin) – will be treated with mercy".

Every Jew is called "Yehuda" because Yehuda's virtuous manner was to investigate his deeds and acknowledge his shortcomings and immediately admit his sins. This is how Yakov Avinu a"h praised him, by telling him, "Yehuda, you, your brothers shall acknowledge" (Bereishit 49:8). The Targum explains – "You admitted and didn't hesitate". Yehuda was able to publicly admit his mistake concerning the account with Tamar, and was not reluctant to say "She is right, it is from me". The Gemarah tells us (Sotah 7b), "Yehuda admitted and did not let shame hold him back, and what was the result? He inherited life in the World to Come".

May it be G-d's will that all of us should be fitting to stand before Hashem on the Day of Judgment and the Creator blessed be He should inscribe all of us in the Book of the Righteous for a good life and for peace. Amen V'Amen.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Constant Protection

“...So that He will not see a shameful thing among you and turn away from behind you.” (Devarim 23:15)

When one brings a visitor to the table, Rabbi Shmuel Natanson explains, the host walks in front of him to show him to his place. When escorting a criminal to jail, the guard walks behind him to watch that he doesn't try to escape. When the Jewish people go in the way of Hashem, Hashem walks in front of them. But when they sin, He walks behind them. This is what is referred to by “So that He will not see a shameful thing among you and turn away from behind you”; so that He will not have to walk behind you.

Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

During the times of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan, there lived in Morocco an outstandingly righteous Rabbi, the gaon Rabbi Pinchas Abisor, zt”l. Rabbi Abisor once had a dispute with a gentile who sold fish. The non-Jew humiliated and scorned the Rabbi during their argument. Rabbi Abisor gave him a piercing look and told him, “For my personal humiliation, I bear no resentment. However, for humiliating the honor of the Torah, I cannot forgive you.” The moment Rabbi Abisor turned to leave, the gentile dropped dead on the spot.

Rabbi David Refael Banon, shlita, relates that this story caused a tremendous kiddush Hashem throughout Mogador. Everyone witnessed the great holiness of Rabbi Abisor. Until then, people had considered him to be a simple person, since he had always lived in utmost modesty. Only after this event, was his exalted stature recognized.

Flowers for Shabbat

There is another incredible story told by Rabbi David Refael Banon about Rabbi Pinchas Abisor, zt”l:

Before Rabbi Abisor became known as an outstanding Torah scholar, he lived in abject poverty. His house was entirely empty. Every Friday, he would go to some abandoned field and gather wild flowers. He would tie them together in a bouquet and walk through the Jewish Mellah.

Once, his wife noticed him going through the streets of the Mellah holding a bouquet of flowers. “Why are you walking around with these flowers?” she asked him.

The tzaddik's response was an illustration of his outstanding piety and righteousness. He told her,

“Because I am impoverished and the people do not care enough to investigate my dire situation, this may, chas v'chalilah, cause Hashem to be angry with them. I go around with these flowers, in order that they should think that I am well-to-do. Anyone who sees me walking around with flowers will assume that if I can afford flowers for Shabbat, my situation cannot be so desperate, and I certainly can afford food. In this way, there will be no accusation in Heaven against the people for not supporting me.”

From this account, we can perceive Rabbi Abisor's exalted piety and modesty. He did not want anyone to know how poor he was, so that he should not become dependent on their help. On the other hand, he feared that their indifference would cause Heavenly retribution, since the people did not sustain him while he was dedicating his time to studying Torah in the Beit Hamidrash. This is why he went around with a bouquet of flowers in his hand. He preferred fulfilling the words of Chazal, “Make your Shabbat simple, so you should not become dependent on others.” He trusted only in Hashem's kindness and not in the benevolence of people.

In truth, if he possessed the power to cause the gentile to drop dead, as in the story above, how much more so could he have arranged a comfortable income for himself. However, he preferred emulating Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, about whom it is said, “He suffices with a small measure of carob from one Shabbat to the next.”

Rabbi Pinchas Abisor is buried in the Mogador cemetery, and a shelter was built above his grave, may his merit protect us, Amen.