

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

PACHAD DAVID



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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 Le'David

Approach Hashem When the King is in the Field

"You shall come to whomever will be the Kohen in those days, and you shall say to him, 'I declare today to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the Land that Hashem swore to our forefathers to give to us'" (Devarim 26:3).

The *parsha* of *bikurim* (first fruits) is a wonderful section in the Torah. It teaches us the extent to which a Jew must show gratitude to Hashem for giving him the Land and for blessing him with livelihood through which he can support himself. Therefore, once the fruits of his field have ripened, he must take a basketful of his first fruits to the Beit Hamikdash. He gives them to the kohen who places them near the *mizbe'ach*. The owner then expresses his thanks to Hashem for all His kindness and goodness. Rashi quotes *Chazal*, "...and you shall say to Him: that you are not ungrateful. Rather, you show gratitude to Hashem." Following the recital, the owner leaves the Beit Hamikdash with a feeling of great happiness for all the good Hashem bestowed upon him.

This *parsha* is read every year during the month of Elul; some years it is read on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Hashanah. What significance does this have?

The *parsha* speaks about a person's livelihood, which we know is determined on Rosh Hashanah. *Chazal* say (*Beitza* 16a) that a person's entire sustenance is fixed from one Rosh Hashanah to the next. This is the same sustenance which is mentioned in this week's *parsha*, from which a person brings *bikurim*.

The *parsha* also mentions the great abundance and good life granted to man if he follows the correct path, which allows him to bring from the first of his crop each year anew. In turn, he thanks Hashem for all the good He bestowed upon him, spiritually and materially. *Chazal* say (*Tanchuma, Ki Tavo* 2) that one who brings *bikurim* and performs the entire ritual in accordance with Hashem's Will, is blessed by a Heavenly Voice: "You brought *bikurim* today, may you merit doing so next year as well." This clarifies the connection between the *parsha* of *bikurim*, the measure of man's livelihood if he follows the correct path, and Rosh Hashanah.

There is an additional connection between Parshat Ki Tavo

and Rosh Hashanah. Towards the end of the *parsha* we read about the admonition and harsh curses *r"l* which will befall those who do not hearken to Hashem's voice. Among the curses mentioned are a lengthy exile, severe poverty, various difficult and unbearable sicknesses, and enemies waging war against Am Yisrael and taking them captive.

This *parsha* is read during Elul, in advance of Rosh Hashanah when we stand in judgement before Hashem, because the Torah wishes to warn us to repent for all the sins we committed. We must draw closer to Hashem, achieving a state of "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (*Shir Hashirim* 6:3), the initials of which spell Elul. Each of the four words "אני לדודי ודודי לי" ends with the letter "yud" – 10, corresponding to the forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur.

The Torah is warning us to maximize our use of these days of mercy and forgiveness. It is a time for repentance, praying with concentration, increasing one's Torah study, and taking care to observe the mitzvot as best as we can. This will grant us a good life filled with sustenance and abundance, which will enable us to bring *bikurim* from the fruits of our harvest. But if, G-d forbid, we do not try to improve our ways, our fate will be determined on Rosh Hashanah accordingly, may Hashem protect us.

We must appreciate the lofty status of the month of Elul. It is a time in which we can elevate ourselves and draw closer to Hashem so as to be inscribed and sealed for a good and blessed year. How important it is to utilize these days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur! The Holy Ba'al Hatanya *zy"a* describes these holy days as a time when Hashem is considered as a "King in the field." Hashem descends from His Heavenly Palace to This World, so that we can feel His closeness. This leads us to repentance and the opportunity to ask Him for whatever our heart's desire.

Although we no longer have a Beit Hamikdash and cannot bring *bikurim*, we can still take advantage of the lesson inherent in this mitzvah. When we read this section during Elul, it reminds us that since today we cannot fulfil this mitzvah, we must rectify our ways and bring from the *bikurim* within ourselves, meaning we must offer Hashem our Torah and mitzvot. We must thank Him and also confess our sins which are a result of the *yetzer hara* which wants to destroy us. By admitting our sins and repenting, we will merit being inscribed and sealed for a good and blessed year, with continued abundance so we can continue thanking Hashem for the abundant good he bestows upon us. When Hashem sees that we are grateful and appreciate the bounty, He will grant us more abundance – and we will thereby merit blessing and success in all our endeavors.

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Ki Tavo



Hilula

16 Elul
Rabbi Yehuda Pinto *zy"a*

17 Elul
Rabbi Daniel Pinto *zy"a*

18 Elul
Rabbi Abdallah Somech,
author of *Zivchei Tzedek*

19 Elul
Rabbi Bechor Ahron
Alnakaveh, Av Beit Din
Yerushalayim

20 Elul
Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian

21 Elul
Rabbi Aharon Abuchatzera

22 Elul
Rabbi Yehuda ben
Simchon





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

Rejoice with All the Good You Have

“You shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you and your household” (Devarim 26:11).

In this section of *bikurim* the Torah instructs us, “You shall rejoice with all the goodness.” This seems to be a superfluous command. Generally, if a person is blessed with much good, it is unnecessary to tell him to be happy; it is an automatic reaction.

Rabbi Rachamim David Koskas *shlit”a*, in his *sefer Maskil el Dal*, answers that sometimes a person has an abundance of good, he truly lacks nothing, but he is still not happy with his lot. Either due to *Chazal*’s proclamation: “One who possesses one hundred desires two hundred,” or due to the presence of other factors that cause him to be unhappy, in which case all his wealth and goodness does not bring him joy.

This is why the Torah sees fit to warn us, “You shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem, your G-d, has given you and your household.” Rejoice with the good you possess, “be completely joyous” and use this joy for the service of Hashem.

Receiving a Portion in the Merit of Unity

“To the Reuvenite, the Gadite, and to half the tribe of the Manassite” (Devarim 29:7).

Why did Moshe Rabbeinu add the letter *yud* (translated as “ite”) to the names of the tribes — ראובני, גד, מנשי — and not simply say, “to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menashe?”

I wish to share the following insight: When the descendants of Gad and Reuven came to ask Moshe Rabbeinu to give them the land of Sichon and Og, at first he did not want to agree because he was afraid they wanted to separate themselves from the rest of the people and not take part in conquering the Land. However when they promised to go with Am Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael and help them conquer the Land, only then did he accede to their request. It follows then that receiving the land of Sichon and Og was due to uniting themselves with Am Yisrael.

We know that Hashem only rests His presence among Am Yisrael if they are in complete unity and there is no dissidence among them. *Chazal* say (*Tanchuma Nitzavim* 1), “The *Shechina* only rests its Presence and transcends when Yisrael are unified as one group.”

Therefore, when mentioning giving the land of Sichon and Og to Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menashe, Moshe Rabbeinu added the letter *yud* to the end of each of their names, to signify that Hashem was with them as a result of their remaining united with the rest of Am Yisrael.



FROM THE TREASURY

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

The Soul and Fruit; the Ground and Mitzvot

“You shall take of the first of every fruit of the ground that you bring in from your Land” (Devarim 26:2).

The Midrash tells us (*Bereishit Rabba* 1:1) that “first” always refers to Torah. This teaches us that man must observe the Torah and mitzvot so Hashem should give him reward in the Next World. “Fruits” refers to reward as it says (*Pe’ah* 1a), “These are the precepts whose fruits a person enjoys in This World but whose principal remains intact for him in the World to Come.” Through observing the Torah, he merits reward.

The verse says “you shall take” — from the term “taking as a wife” — as it says (*Devarim* 24:1), “If a man marries (יקח) a wife.” This implies that when man devotes himself to Torah, which is called a wife, he thereby merits fruit — reward.

It is impossible for the soul to fulfil Torah and mitzvot without a physical body, and mitzvot can be fulfilled in This World only, not in the World to Come. In addition, most of the mitzvot concern material concepts, for example *Shemittah*, *Yovel*, bearing children, and performing brit milah. Very few of the mitzvot are of a spiritual nature alone; prayer is one such notable example. This being the case, in This World Hashem rewards the soul for the mitzvot observed by the body. Therefore, the Torah says, “You shall take of the first of every fruit of the ground that you bring in from your Land,” for this Torah and its fruit is derived from the ground, from this material world. When a person dies he takes nothing with him, neither silver nor gold, only the Torah and mitzvot he performed in This World.

The soul is a deposit given over to man and we must guard it from the *yetzer hara*, ensuring it not sully our soul with sins. As the verse continues, “that Hashem, your G-d, gives you.” Eretz Yisrael is given to Am Yisrael on condition, as *Chazal* say (*Sifri Devarim* 38), “If you perform Hashem’s Will, the land of Canaan is yours. If not, you will be exiled from it.” So too, the soul is given to us as a deposit. We must take good care of it so it should not be taken from us.

How can man guard this deposit from damages which can be wreaked by the *yetzer hara*? Through increasing one’s Torah study. As the Gemara says (*Yoma* 28b): “From the time of our Forefathers, they always had study houses. While they were in Egypt, they had a study house. While they were in the Wilderness, they had a study house. Avraham Avinu was a scholar and sat and studied Torah. Yitzchak Avinu was a scholar and sat and studied Torah. Yaakov Avinu was a scholar and sat and studied Torah.”



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

Investing one's Time in Torah Study and Kindness

Nowadays people are addicted to various impure devices, to the extent that they no longer speak to their spouses because they are constantly glued to the screen. At a *shiur* I gave, I noticed that one of the participants was constantly looking down towards his legs. I understood that it was not his legs that interested him, but rather the impure device he held there, *r"l*. One of my *talmidim* from Montreal told me that after hearing me deliver a lecture one Tisha B'Av night about the great tragedy inherent in iPhones, he returned home and told his wife he is going to smash his expensive phone, although he bought it not long ago. He explained to his surprised wife that because of this device he no longer goes to study Torah, does not go to the *beit kneset* for prayers, and who knows what else will happen to him if he does not smash this device immediately. With his wife's agreement he went ahead — and from that point on their marital harmony began thriving, Baruch Hashem.

Someone approached me and told me he is building a huge mall in America. He asked for a blessing that it should be successful. When I asked him if it would house impure stores, he stuttered and did not give a clear reply. I told him that if this was the case he must be careful his children do not get involved with bad culture. He laughed and replied that his children are already grown and he has nothing to worry about. I told him there is no guardian against immorality and even at age eighty the *yetzer hara* does not leave man alone.

Much later he returned to me, clearly distressed. "What a shame I did not listen to you!" he said. "The mall only caused me great losses — material but mainly spiritual. I myself almost stumbled with serious prohibitions!"

A person thinks that if he invests his time in Torah study, fulfilling mitzvot, and acts of kindness, he will lose out. But this is not the case, as the following story demonstrates:

I once planned to travel from Geneva to New York, from New York to Chicago and then back to Geneva. The outward journey was planned for Monday and the return journey for Wednesday. However, a short time before the flight, Rabbi Nissim Revivo *zy"l*, Av Beit Din of Paris, called me and asked me to participate in a dinner he was organizing for his institutions in Paris, on Monday evening. I told him I would have loved to participate, but it will not work out since I am due to fly to New York on Monday.

Rabbi Revivo did not concede so quickly. He explained that all the yearly participants look forward to my presentation and my blessings in the merit of my holy ancestors. Upon reflection, I realized that although I had scheduled a flight for Monday, I could postpone it to Tuesday and also postpone my return flight accordingly.

I seriously debated the matter in my mind. In the end, I agreed to his request, for the honor of Torah and its scholars, despite the difficulty in postponing all the planned appointments, and the financial loss incurred from cancelling the flight and purchasing new tickets. I postponed my outbound flight to Tuesday and the return flight to Thursday.

While in Chicago on Thursday morning, I was in the middle of receiving people when suddenly my attendant entered looking shaken. He told me in alarm that last night's Swissair flight from New York to Geneva, the flight we were supposed to take according to our original plans, had crashed into the Atlantic Ocean shortly after take-off! And there were no survivors. I thanked Hashem for His enormous kindness in saving me, in the merit of the Torah for which I had postponed my flight.



WORDS OF THE SAGES

We Merit the Million-Dollar Lottery Daily

A significant part of this month of mercy and forgiveness is already behind us. We are at the height of the days during which we anoint Hashem as King over us, as we approach Rosh Hashanah when we will observe the obligation of the day, "Anoint Me as King over you." However, it must be stressed that this duty must be carried out with joy.

In this week's *parsha* the Torah writes (*Devarim* 28:47), "Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d, amid gladness and goodness of your heart, when everything was abundant." Rashi explains, "When everything was abundant: even though you had everything good." The holy Arizal offers a different explanation.

He explains that the words "when everything was abundant" define the joy we must feel when fulfilling a mitzvah. It must be the same joy we felt "when everything was abundant!" If a person would possess all the good in the world, there would be no limit to his joy. This is how we should feel when performing a mitzvah!

In one of his lectures, the *tzaddik* Hagaon Rabbi Reuven Karlenstein *zt"l* addressed the crowd: "Do you remember the lottery advert that adorned the buses and billboards — The Fifty-Million Shekel Lottery? People were hysterical. Can words describe the joy of the lucky winner who won this fantastic prize?"

"I remember," related Rabbi Karlenstein, "once travelling by taxi in Bnei Brak, when I noticed the driver looked particularly happy and excited. One could see it was some special occasion for him. Before I managed to ask, he began to share his story: 'Yesterday I gave a ride to the lottery winner! He asked me to drive him to the lottery building in Tel Aviv. At first I did not believe him but slowly it began to sink in — he was telling the truth! Honorable Rav, what should I say!' he told me excitedly. 'He got out the taxi by the lottery office and told me to wait for him. Several moments later he returned and showed me a check for 14 million shekel, bearing the lottery stamp!'"

"The driver spoke with such excitement; one could almost hear the beating of his heart. And why? Because yesterday he *drove* the winner! If so, how much happier is the one who actually won all those millions!"

This, says the holy Arizal, should be the joy we feel when performing a mitzvah! We are obligated to feel as if we won the highest lottery sum, as if we possess all the good in the world! We laid tefillin today? We earned millions! We recited the blessing after eating bread? We earned millions! We learnt Torah? We earned millions!

Every prayer, every blessing, must be accompanied by the feeling that we are talking to the King. In this way we will utter every word slowly and with joy! Let us really feel that we are doing every mitzvah for the honor of Hashem

Yitbarach! This leads to enthusiasm, excitement, and joy and is a wonderful way of preparing ourselves for the Day of Judgement.

MAY THE MEMORY OF THE TZADDIK BE FOR A BLESSING



The Esteemed Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol zy" a. In Honor of his Hilula, 26 Elul.

"Know, my beloved students! I will continue to stand before the Holy One Blessed Be He in prayer after my death, just as I did during my lifetime. I will not forsake you in my death, just as I did not forsake you during my lifetime."

These were the last words of the esteemed Maran, the *tzaddik* and miracle worker, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol zy" a. He promised explicitly to pray on behalf of the sheep of his pasture and affect salvation when they mention his name.

In this column we share some anecdotes demonstrating miraculous deliverances on account of the esteemed Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto Hagadol zy" a. Conveying the praise of *tzaddikim* reinforces our faith in the purity of their prayers and the tremendous power accorded to their supplications before the One who sits on the Throne of Mercy.

Sent by Heaven

On Sunday the tenth of Adar 5755, Moreinu v'Rabbeinu *shlit" a*, descendant of the illustrious Pinto dynasty, served as *sandak* at a brit milah in Paris. He had been invited by Mr. David Cohen, a prominent member of the community. In middle of the *seudah* one of the participants, Mr. Ben-Shushan, stood up and related the following inspirational story:

On the previous *hilula* of Rabbi Chaim Pinto (5754), he travelled to Mogador to participate in the *hilula* of the *tzaddik*. At that time, he suffered from severe pain in his legs, with multiple complications, to the extent that he could no longer walk unaided and required two people to support him.

When he arrived at the cemetery, he decided he would sleep by the grave of Rabbi Chaim Hagadol and perhaps Hashem would grant him a complete recovery in the merit of the holy *tzaddik*. Thus, he remained by the grave throughout the night.

That night he dreamed that Rabbi Chaim himself began to operate on his foot. After concluding the surgery, the *tzaddik* told him, "In the merit of your faith in Hashem and in *tzaddikim*, I was sent from Heaven specially to heal you. Now you may rise because you are cured. You may return to France without anyone's help! Awaken from your slumber!"

Mr. Ben-Shushan immediately woke up and began deliberating whether the dream was mere fantasy or reality. After all, he had slept the entire night by the grave, hoping for

salvation in the merit of the *tzaddik*. Perhaps the dream had just been wishful thinking.

But suddenly he felt his legs move. He tried to stand up unaided, and to his absolute astonishment, he succeeded in getting up and walking around on his own!

His friends were amazed and asked him, "What happened to you? Were you putting on a show until now that you could not walk by yourself, making as if you were handicapped?"

Mr. Ben-Shushan dismissed their accusations and told them of his awesome dream. Everyone present celebrated joyously! It was a great *kiddush Hashem* by the gravesite of Rabbi Chaim Pinto on his *hilula*.

May his merit protect us.

Named After the Tzaddik

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu *shlit" a* related another miraculous story:

"My disciple, Rav Shimon Elzas, had been married for a number of years, but did not merit having children. Every year, he would religiously visit the grave of my holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy" a. There he would shed copious tears, begging Hashem for children in the merit of the *tzaddik*. I was always moved by his pain.

"During the *hilula* ceremony in 5763, all the participants joined in his anguish and rent the heavens in supplication for this couple. They blessed him, 'May it be His Will that next year you will return here with your wife and a baby boy whom you will name Chaim, after the *tzaddik* zy" a.'

"Heavenly mercy was aroused in the merit of the *tzaddik* and nine months later his wife gave birth to a baby boy! The brit milah took place on Sunday of Parshat Balak 5764, and I was invited to be the *sandak*. However, I was in *chutz l'aretz* at the time, so I gave over the merit to R' Shimon's brother. This is a most miraculous story!"

A Tumult in the City

We wish to conclude this section with an excerpt from a lecture delivered by Moreinu *shlit" a* on Motza'ei Shabbat Parshat Chukat (5766). Speaking about the creation's preparation in approach of the future redemption, may it arrive speedily in our days, he mentioned a miraculous story that had taken place not long before.

"I wish to relate a wonderful story that took place just six months ago. The home of my holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy" a, which was almost two hundred and twenty years old, required renovations. Many of the homes in the area had collapsed and it was dangerous to approach his house. We set about raising funds and then signed a contract with an Arab contractor. To save on expenses, we supplied the materials. R' Avraham Knafo *shlit" a*, was responsible for the project and oversaw it in the best way possible. He told me afterward that one day while the work was in progress he discovered that a considerable amount of materials brought to the building site had simply disappeared.

"He immediately turned to the contractor and asked for an explanation. The contractor claimed he did not know a thing. He was so adamant in his denial that he even swore that if he was, indeed, the one who stole the materials, he should be punished with an unusual death which he spelled out to R' Knafo.

"The very next day, they were shocked to discover that this contractor had been killed during the night in a brawl. He had proven to one and all that he was the true thief. He received his punishment, exactly as he had predicted.

"The workers, who knew about his treachery, were very worried about their own fate. They too had taken part in the theft, but claimed the contractor had instructed them to do so. They asked forgiveness from the *tzaddik* so his wrath should not strike them too. However, one of the workers made a mockery of the whole thing. He scoffed at his frightened comrades, telling them they were making a fuss over nothing. He had not even finished speaking, when his mouth became distorted in a most ugly way. It remained that way until he came to the *tzaddik*'s home and personally begged forgiveness!"

This is the meaning of Chazal, "Tzaddikim are greater after their deaths than in their lifetime." The *tzaddikim* receive their power from the holy Torah and their influence effects even inanimate objects in their surroundings. The inanimate house of the *tzaddik* Rabbi Chaim Pinto zy" a became sanctified, similar to the frying pans of the Mishkan which were sanctified through being used for a mitzvah.